- **LIFESTYLE / C1**

'Something to Crow About': Cocks, corals and criminals

- **SPORTS / A32**

It's Dallas vs Miami for NBA crown

- **WORLD / A28**

Bolivia president gives one-fifth of territory to farmers

- **ENTERTAINMENT / A2-8**

Judy, Ryan to wed next year, says her mother

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

			3			8		
	4	7	8		9		3	
1		8				2	6	
	6			3			8	5
			6	5	7			
5	1			8			2	
	8	5				7		2
	2		1		6	3	5	
		1			8			

Difficulty Level ★

BEGINNING TODAY, Sudoku, a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers, will be published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer. It will be run in the Comic Relief section Monday through Saturday and in the Sunday Inquirer Magazine on Sundays.

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, June 5, 2006 ★★ 7 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 177 P18 website: www.inq7.net

2 cloned US mules make successful racing debuts

PATI BILIS NG TAKBO, NA-CLONE DIN?

WINNEMUCCA, NEVADA—Two qualifying heats, two wire-to-wire victories, two nearly identical times. It was almost like the same mule won twice.

Idaho Gem, the world's first equine clone, and his brother, Idaho Star, made

2 CLONED/ A12

Congress adds ₱4B to budget of DepEd

Bicameral body cites classroom shortage

By TJ Burgonio

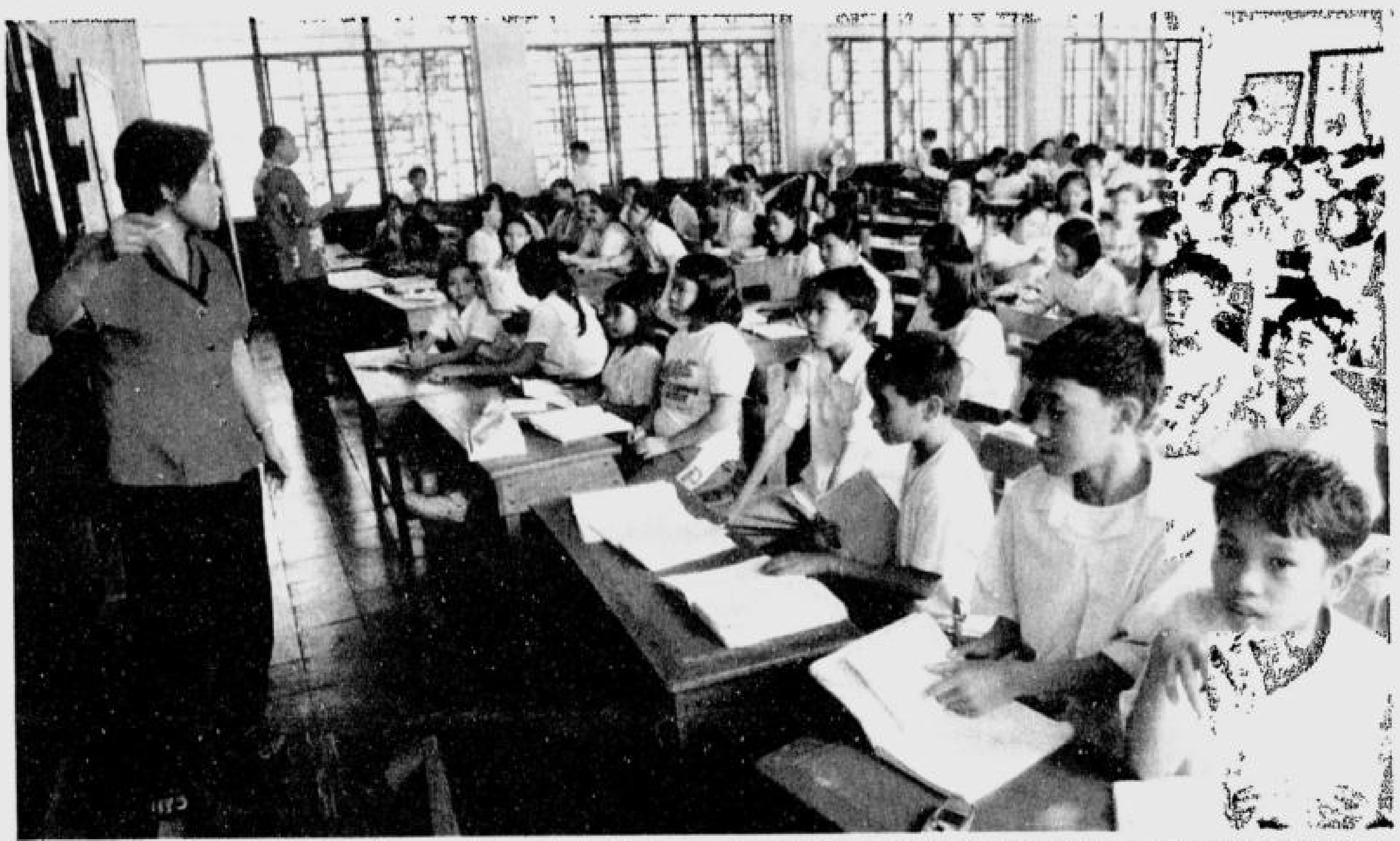
AS PUBLIC SCHOOLS open their doors today with the perennial shortages in classrooms, textbooks and teachers, parents and teachers might find comfort elsewhere: Senators and congressmen have reached a consensus to raise the Department of Education's budget.

The lawmakers met for their first bicameral conference on the proposed P1.053-trillion 2006 national budget yesterday, agreeing "in principle" to increase the DepEd's P108-billion outlay by some P4 billion but keeping their hardline stance on the rest of the items.

"It's good that we agreed on one item. Both panels agreed to solve the problem of classroom backlog, as well as the shortage in teachers, chairs and textbooks," said Sen. Manuel Villar Jr., chair

CONGRESS/ A23

More Education stories on Pages A20, A21, A25 and A26



TWO-IN-ONE CLASSROOM: A familiar scene in learning institutions coping with classroom shortages takes place at the Geronimo Santiago School in Manila in this file photo. Two classes are held simultaneously but handled separately by two teachers in one room. PDI PHOTO

STATE OF RP EDUCATION

Learning test scores below world average

(Second of a series)

i TEAM Report
Fernando del Mundo
Chief, PDI i-Team

OFFICIAL STATISTICS ON THE state of Philippine education are grim.

Of the 57.6 million Filipinos aged 10 to 64 years, 9.2 million or 16 percent are "functionally illiterate," says the Department of Education.

This means these people are unable to read, write, subtract and add, or understand simple instructions—something someone normally learns by Grade 4.

The national "functional literacy rate" is 84 percent, but the DepEd says this is "probably overstated."

In spite of the imperatives of universal elementary education, roughly 10 percent of children do not have access to it.

Sixty-eight percent of students complete the elementary grades, 42 percent finish high school, and 14 percent graduate from college.

Of Grade 6 kids, only 26 percent have a mastery of English, 15 percent of Science and 31 percent of Math.

Only 7 percent of senior high school students had mastered English; 2 percent, Science, and 16 percent, Math.

The national average score in the TIMSS (Trends in Math and Science Survey) in 2003 was 378 in math—89 points behind the international average and 227 points away from the highest score notched by Singapore.

"Clearly, these scores are not

LEARNING/ A22

Group lists 168 leftists missing

By Norman Bordadora and Luige A. del Puerto

IT IS A DAY OBSERVED IN MANY countries around the world but one no family would wish they would ever have to commemorate. It is a day to remember people who disappeared into thin air.

The human rights group Karapatan yesterday marked the international day of the "desaperacidos," or the disappeared, with a call on security forces to finally bring out the people they may have abducted.

In a statement, Karapatan said its tally showed that 168 people had become victims of "involuntary disappearances" since President Macapagal-Arroyo came to power in 2001.

It said the latest victim was Philip Limjoco, one of about 50 people whom state prosecutors had charged with rebellion for alleged involvement in a Left-Right conspiracy to overthrow

GROUP/ A13

Tin-pot dictator rises from Edsa II

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE TRANSFORMATION OF President Macapagal-Arroyo from a creature of people power upheaval to a tin-pot authoritarian during the past five years is one of the most amazing episodes of political change in the erratic cycle of Philippine democracy.

Three decades after the overthrow of the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos, the Philippines has never been more threatened with a reimposition of another authoritarian rule than it is today under a democratically elected presidency.

Five years on since People Power II handed power to then Vice President Arroyo, the country has squeezed through a state of national emergency (in February).

TIN-POT/ A12

'PINOY BIG BROTHER'

Chinoy teener from Cebu wins reality TV show

CHINESE-FILIPINO lass Kimberly "Kim" Chiu greets her fans after winning the Pinoy Big Brother Teen Edition. RUDY ESPERAS

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Entertainment

CHINESE-FILIPINO KIMBERLY "KIM" Chiu of Cebu was declared the big winner of "Pinoy Big Brother's Teen Edition" during the finals held at the Aliw Theater late Saturday night.

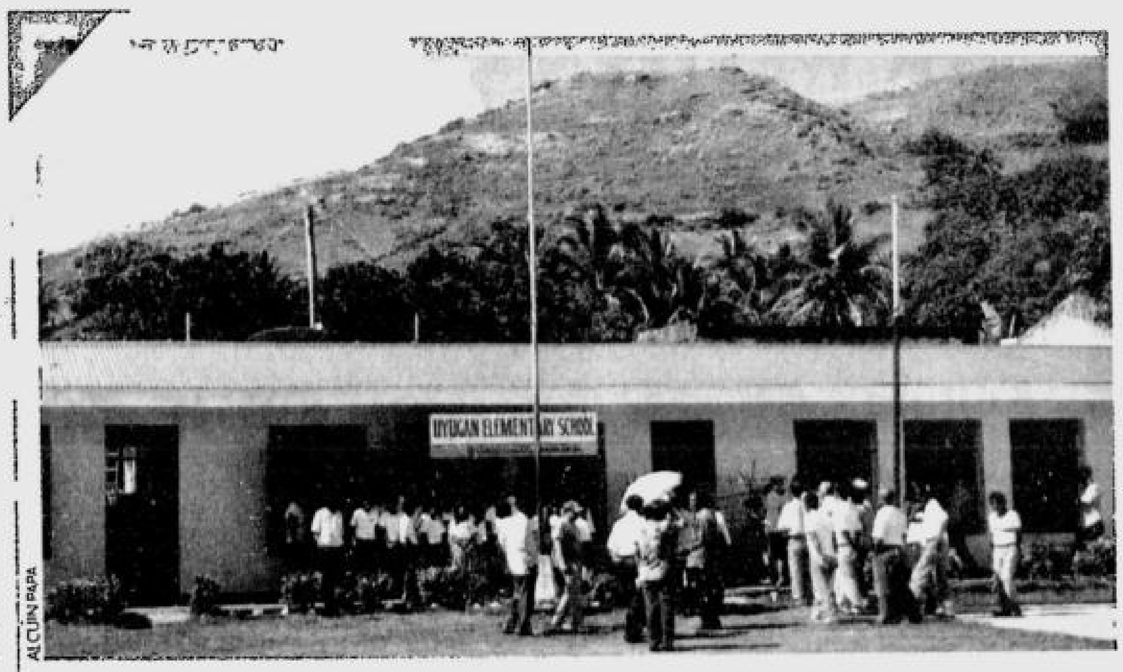
Kim bested 13 other housemates in her monthlong stay inside the Big Brother House, garnering a whopping 626,562 text votes or 41.4 percent of the total—twice that of her nearest rival Mikee Lee who only posted 313,032 votes or 20.7 percent.

Filipino-American Gerald Anderson of General Santos City placed third with 293,234 votes or 19.4 percent, while Clare Cabiguin of Bukidnon was fourth with 279,390 votes or 18.5 percent.

Kim's prizes include a condominium in Chateau Valenzuela, an adventure package, a four-year college scholarship from AMA and P1 million in cash.

Resplendent in a puffy

CHINOY/ A6



ALCUIN PAPA

STUDENTS and teachers at the Uyugan Elementary School on Batan Island in Batanes attend the opening of a Library Hub as a repository of books that will be circulated in schools around the province.

Batanes school kids meet Frodo

By Alcuin Papa

IVATAN CHILDREN WILL FINALLY visit Frodo and Middle Earth, the legendary setting of J.R.R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings," thanks to Library Hubs that local education officials opened in Batanes last week.

Tolkien's trilogy, as well as award-winning children's books by local authors, will be available in six Library Hubs found in the municipalities of Basco, Mahatao, Ivana and Uyugan—all on Batan Island—as well as on Sabtang and Itbayat islands.

According to local education officials, some 28,000 books will soon be circulating in schools around the province. They gave the INQUIRER a tour of the Library Hub at the Uyugan Elementary School, which can be reached in 45 minutes from the provincial capital of Basco.

All 69 students of the school will be able to read the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, a donation from academician Isagani Cruz.

They can also choose books from local publishing houses, such as Adarna, Tahanan, Museo Pambata, Cacho Hermanos, Anvil, OMF, Bookmark, Ayala Museum and Lampara.

BATANES/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Central and Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY KATE V. PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/06/04/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Second FRONTPAGE
E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph
Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Clash on wages looms, warn militants

By Leila B. Salaverria

A SHOWDOWN LOOMS BETWEEN WORKERS and Malacañang.

A militant labor group yesterday blamed this on the government's tepid response to the P125 across-the-board daily wage hike bill passed on second reading at the House of Representatives.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye had earlier said that although the House of Representatives' concern for the workers was appreciated, the regional wage boards were the appropriate fora to determine the workers' needs.

Various labor groups have long been pushing for a legislated wage hike for the country's workers. They claim the minimum wage can hardly meet their needs, especially with the continuously rising prices of basic commodities.

The proposed bill is being pushed by party-list groups Anakpawis, Akbayan and Partido Manggagawa.

"President Macapagal-Arroyo and puppets of the big employers in the administration are inviting a major political showdown with Filipino workers by killing the passage of the legislated P125 across-the-board pay hike for the working class," the fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) said in a statement.

The group also accused the President of "prostituting" workers' rights for higher wages just to appease the government's business clients, describing the move as "outrageous and totally revolting."

Pamalakaya national chair Fernando Hicap said Malacañang's position was a "betrayal" and a "massacre" of workers' rights. He said workers should take their grievance to the streets.

"This is an extreme expression of class betrayal by the Arroyo administration. The Filipino working class must assert their collective rights and interests in the streets to frustrate President Arroyo's political massacre of workers' rights to higher wages and wage increases," Hicap said.

Pamalakaya also said the administration did not want to support the legislated wage hike because it did not want the credit for it to go to Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran or any of the members of the so-called Batasan 5, namely, Bayan Muna Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teddy Casiño and Joel Virador, Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano and Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza.

All six lawmakers had been critical of the Arroyo administration and were accused of rebellion. Beltran, in fact, has been indicted for rebellion.

"She is afraid Beltran and the Batasan 5 lawmakers would receive credit for their painstaking work in pushing the P125-wage hike bill in Congress.

This is why the President is not supportive of the proposed legislated wage hike, aside from her first-rate class bias in favor of big foreign and local capitalists," Pamalakaya said.

Cops report no progress in Sanchez bomb probe

By Luige A. del Puerto

FOUR DAYS AFTER THE BOMB ATTACK ON Batangas Gov. Armando Sanchez that killed two of his aides, police yesterday admitted they were still at a loss as to who wanted him dead and why.

Police had earlier said they suspected organized crime groups based in Batangas involved in oil pilferage, drug trafficking, extortion and hijacking may have been behind Thursday's attempt on Sanchez' life.

But as of yesterday, the police were not any closer to a definite list of suspects or motives, an INQUIRER source said, adding that "there are many possible motives at this time."

Investigators had also not discounted other angles in the attack, such as politics, destabilization or even a leftist hit.

Another angle being looked into was Sanchez's crackdown on the illegal numbers game "jueteng."

"But I can't see a jueteng angle here," the source said, although he quickly added that police were not ruling out the possibility that someone or some group wanted to eliminate the man once tagged in the Senate as a jueteng operator in Batangas. Sanchez had denied the accusation.

"These were small-timers trying to set up guerrilla-type operations," the INQUIRER source, who sought anonymity because he was not authorized to speak, said.

Organized crime groups

Police, however, appear to be focusing on the organized crime groups in Batangas.

A ranking police officer yesterday said these crime groups had the capability to fight back and, thus, remained suspects in the bomb attack.

The officer, who is familiar with the politics and security of Batangas, said one of these groups had once displayed its readiness to clash with the police.

"There are syndicated crime groups who control routes and extort from fuel tankers," said the officer.

"These crime groups being dismantled by the governor ... have the capability to fight back because they are armed. At one time, our SAF (Special Action Force) had fought one (such) group. Their hideout was raided, and they fought back," he said.

The officer could no longer recall other details of the operation, except that one of the suspects had lobbed a grenade and wounded a SAF officer.

Senior Supt. Ricardo Padilla, head of the team investigating the attack, earlier identified one such group as the Black Shark Gang, a dreaded syndicate operating in Batangas City and in the towns of Bauan and San Pascual.

'Protection money'

Aside from hijackings and highway robberies, the group also demands "protection money" from businessmen at the Batangas International Port.

Sanchez had helped Batangas businessmen seek the intervention of then Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes to put a stop to these illegal activities at the port.

The INQUIRER source said a key to successfully cracking the case was to reconstruct the bomb used in the attack.

"Right now, the type of bomb is the only clear information we have. The question is, who has the capability to carry out such an attack?" he said.

But a report from the Philippine National Police-Bomb Data Center said the scene of the explosion had been contaminated.

From the investigation it was learned that curious people had crowded around Sanchez's Hummer SUV shortly before it left the capitol and exploded on Thursday night.

Several non-blast investigators had beaten the bomb team to the area, and firefighters might have washed away most of the evidence when they responded and put out the fire.

"Likewise, there is a strong possibility that most of the pieces of evidence that will prove the kind of device used could have disintegrated because of the fire," Chief Insp. Raynold Rosero, head of the bomb unit, said in his report.

Rosero said his team was having a difficult time reconstructing the bomb because only a few of its parts had been found.

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Susan to accept nat'l award for FPJ but will snub rites

By Christine O. Avendaño

MOVIE ACTRESS SUSAN ROCES and her family will not be appearing at the Malacañang ceremony on Friday that will confer the National Artist Award on her late husband, movie "king" and former presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

Roces sent word to the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA) that she had asked family friend, respected film director and National Artist Eddie Romero, to accept in behalf of the family the posthumous award for her husband from President Macapagal-Arroyo.

But Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said yesterday that in accordance with Palace protocol regarding presidential awards and based on the "history of acceptance" of the award in the NCAA, only family members should accept the award.

Defensor said he hoped the Poe family would reconsider and send a relative to accept the award to be conferred personally by Ms Arroyo.

He said the NCAA would inform Roces about the protocol.

"I can understand if Ms Roces cannot accept the award but hopefully, she could send someone from the family," Defensor told the INQUIRER.

Roces's decision to snub the Palace event was not surprising. Her allies had advised her to do so since Malacañang announced last month that Poe and five others were this year's National Artist awardees.

Roces herself had been vocal in her accusations that Ms Arroyo had stolen the 2004 elections from her husband.

Poe had run for and lost the presidency to Ms Arroyo in May 2004. He died in December 2004 after suffering a massive stroke.

Defensor said the NCAA wrote to Roces last May 25 to inform her that her husband had been proclaimed a National Artist for "Poe's significant works and achievements in the field of film."

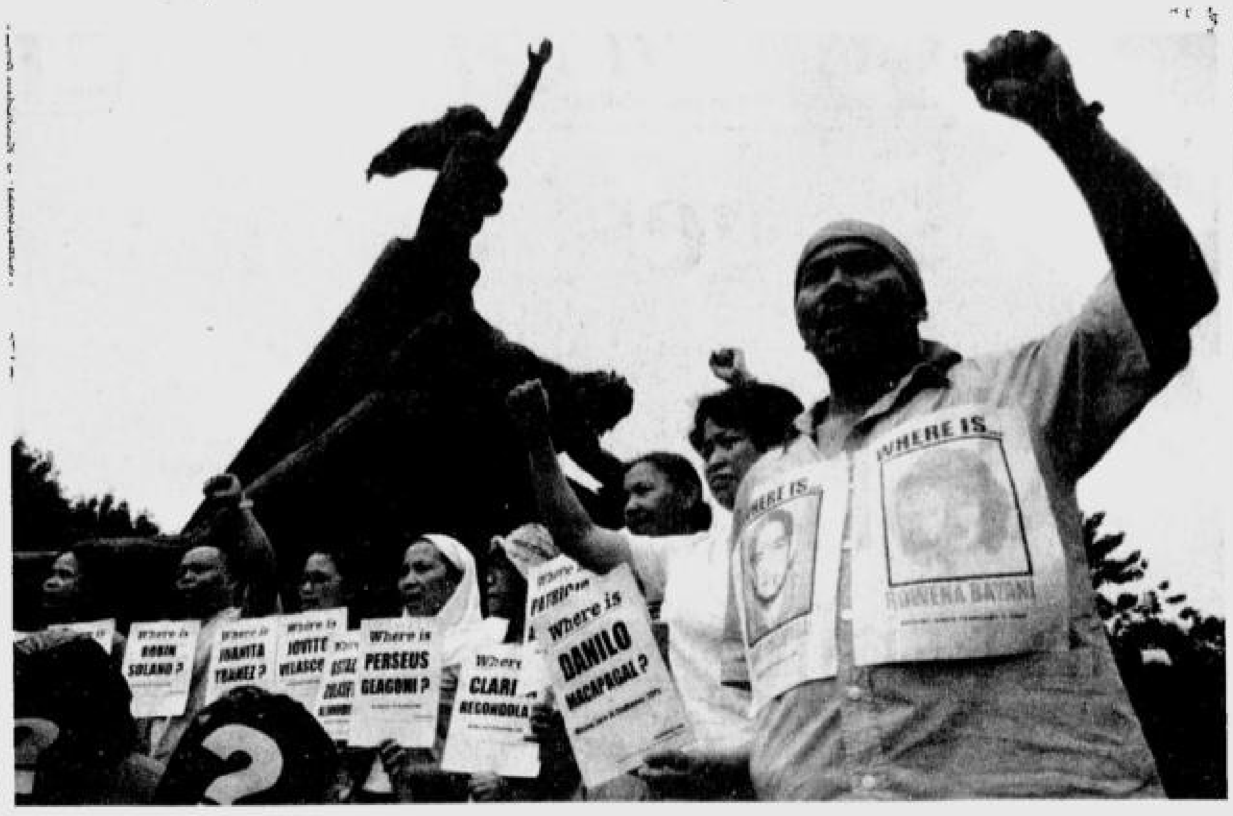
The commission then invited Poe's widow to attend the conferment ceremony to be held in Malacañang at 10:30 a.m. on June 9.

The family was also invited to attend the Order of National Artist exhibit and the Parangal sa Pambansang Alagad ng Sine to be held on the same day at 6 and 7 p.m., respectively, at the Cultural Center of the Philippines in Pasay City.

In a letter to Roces, the NCCA "invited (Roces) or a family representative for a two-minute response during the conferment ceremony."

On May 29, Roces wrote back informing the commission that she would send Romero instead, according to Defensor.

"I have requested Eddie Romero to represent my family." Roces said, explaining that Romero was "a close friend of my husband" who had worked with him in the "filming of 'Agila,' one of [Poe's] memorable films."



Where is ROBIN SOLANO?
Where is JUANITA YBANEZ?
Where is JOVITE VELASCO
Where is PERSEUS GEAGONI?
Where CLARI RECONDOLA
Where is DANILO MACAPAGAL?
WHERE IS

STILL WAITING AND HOPING..
Relatives and friends of people who "simply disappeared into thin air" protest their disappearance during rites marking International Day of the Disappeared at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani in Quezon City. *(See story on Page A1.)* RAFFY LERMA

Nene sees no hope for Con-Ass

By TJ Burgonio

SENATE MINORITY LEADER AQUILINO "Nene" Pimentel Jr. doubts the ongoing dialogue between senators and congressmen on Charter change would yield positive results given the two sides' hard-line positions.

In Pimentel's view, continuing the dialogue is futile.

"I don't see the proposed constituent assembly [Con-Ass] happening. I think it's dead," he said in a statement.

Pimentel said the dialogue was doomed unless the House dropped its stand that any amendments to the Constitution could be approved by Congress convened into a constituent assembly voting jointly.

There was "no way," he said, the senators would change their position that amendments must be voted on separately by both chambers.

The minority leader spoke on the Senate's anti-Cha-cha campaign before a multisectoral assembly in Bacolod City organized by Bishop Vicente Navarra.

Navarra presided over the start of a six-day caravan to oppose the moves to amend the 1987 Constitution.

Some 40 vehicles joined the caravan that took off after a 3:30 p.m. send-off Mass at the San Sebastian Cathedral in front of the Bacolod public plaza.

Vehicles displayed streamers that read "No to Charter change now. Uphold truth, freedom and justice," and "No to fake People's Initiative."

Navarra hoped the caravan, which would end in Bacolod on June 9, would awaken the people to assert their rights by standing up for the truth and defending it.

The Bacolod bishop, however, clarified that the Church was not against amending the Charter per se.

"We are not against Cha-cha. What we are against is holding it now—it is very untimely," Navarra said. *With a report from Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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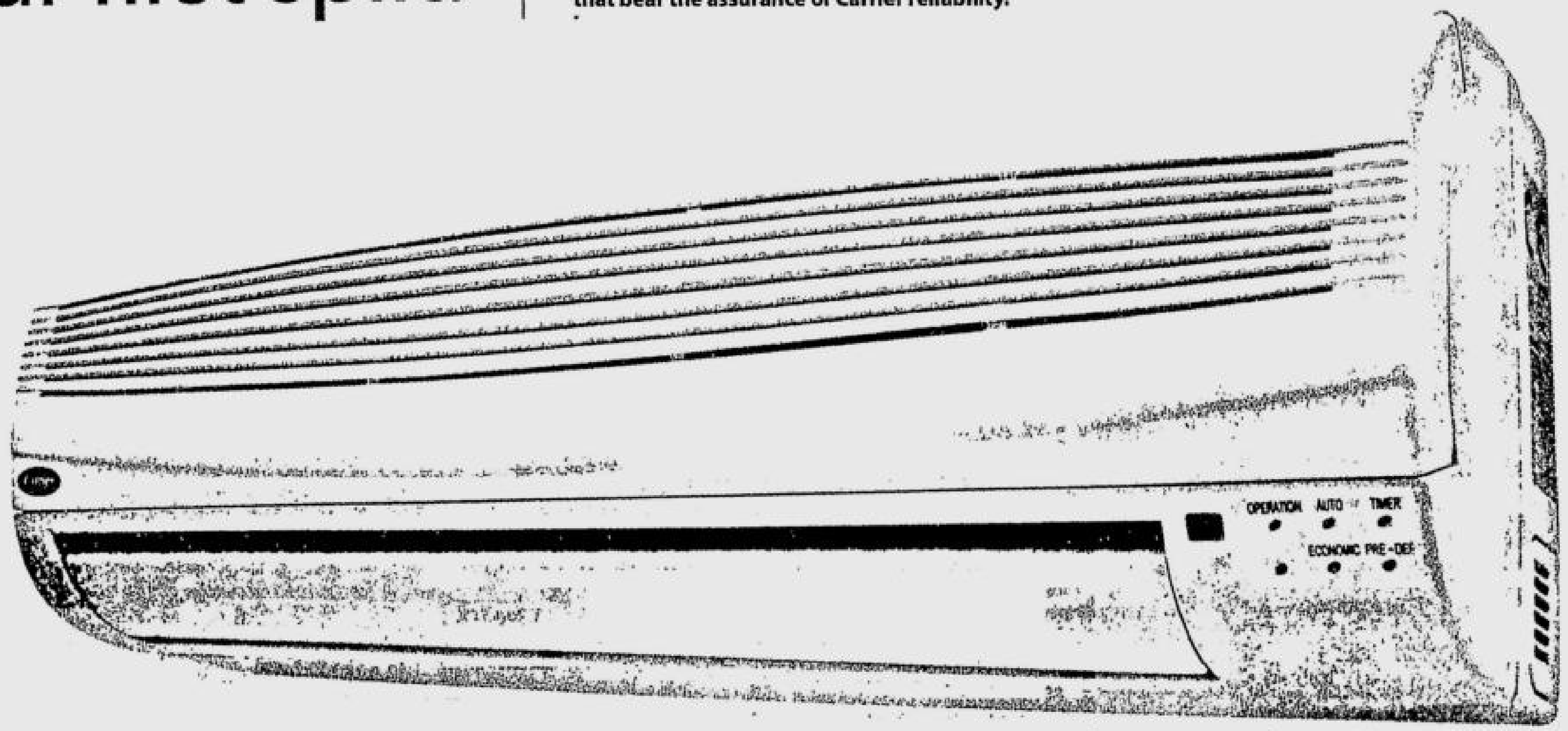

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, June 5, 2006
9th Week in Ordinary Time
Boniface

1st Reading:	2 P 1:2-7
Gospel:	Mark 12:1-12

Using parables, Jesus went on to say, "A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a hole for the wine press and built a watch tower. Then he leased the vineyard to tenants and went abroad.

In due time he sent a servant to receive from the tenants his share of the fruit. But they seized the servant, struck him and sent him back empty-handed. Again the man sent another servant. They also struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. He sent another and they killed him. In the same way they treated many others; some they struck and others they killed. One was still left, his beloved son. And so, last of all, he sent him to the tenants, for he said: 'They will respect my son.'

But those tenants said to one another: 'This is the one who is to inherit the vineyard. Let's kill him and the property will be ours.' So they seized him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. Now, what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others."

And Jesus added, "Have you not read this text of the Scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected has become the keystone. This was the Lord's doing; and we marvel at it.

They wanted to arrest him for they realized that Jesus meant this parable for them, but they were afraid of the crowd. So they left him and went away.

Commentary

Now it is time to be good news and express in our lives all the extraordinary experiences and knowledge of God that has been shared with us. Let us begin. We have everything necessary for a life of piety, devotion, virtue, self-control and discernment. Remember that we do this primarily together in community, we are held accountable for our growth in grace as we learn to care for one another. We are warned: just because we know of God doesn't mean that we obey God. We have inherited everything from God, but what are we doing with it?

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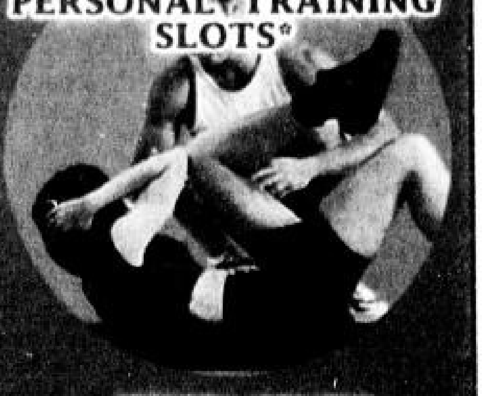

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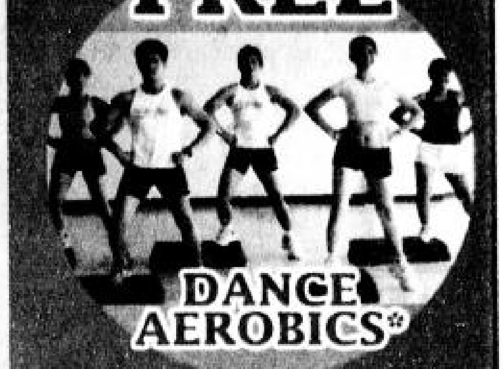

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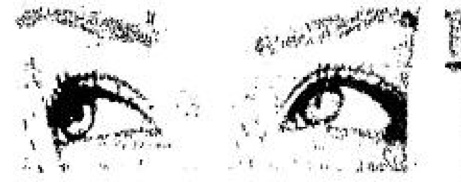

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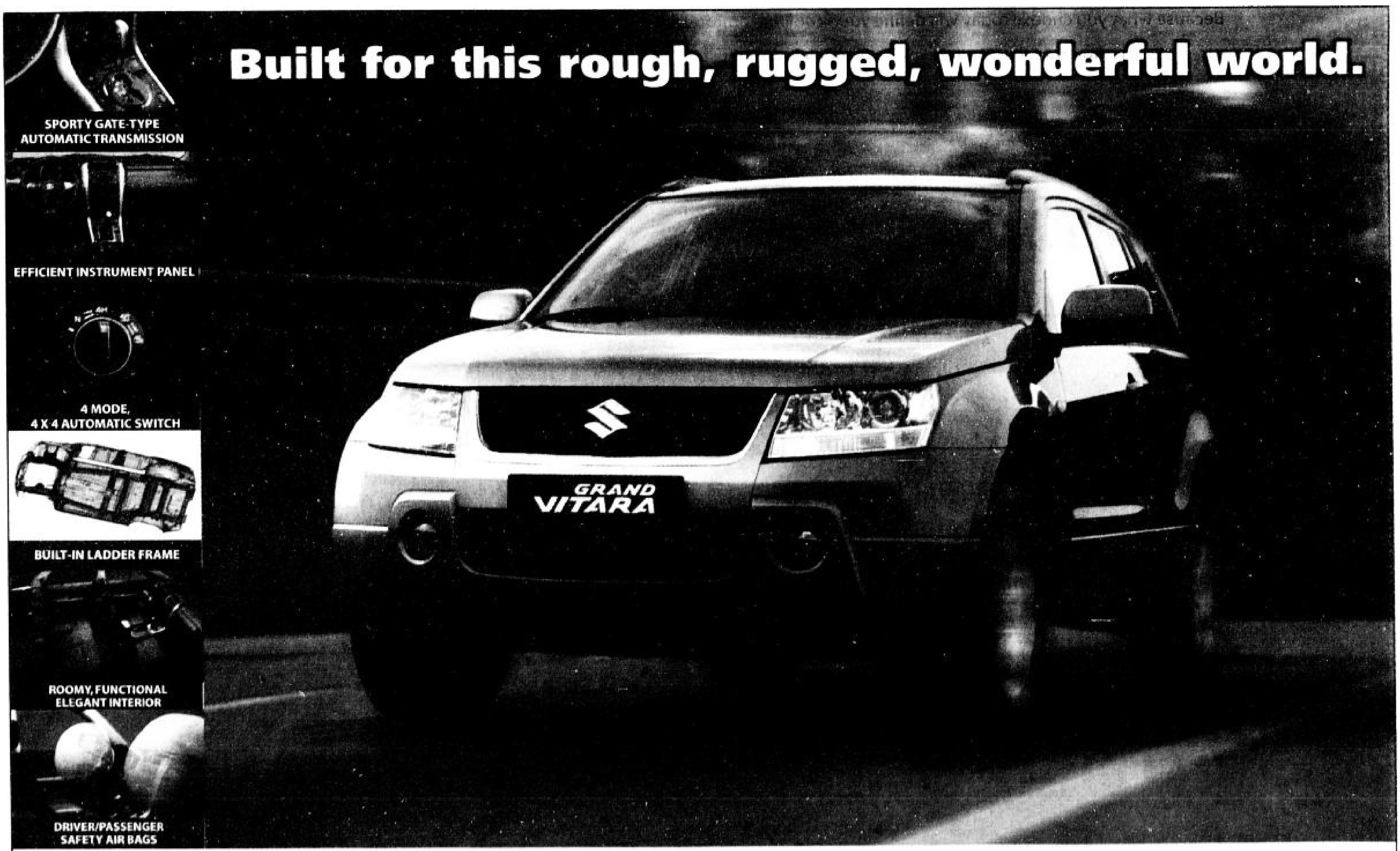
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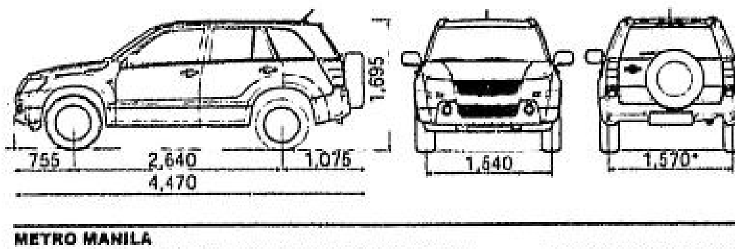

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Batanes school kids meet Frodo

From page A1

Book titles include "Estrelita the Little Wishing Star" by May Tobias, "The Boy Who Had Five Lolas" by Grace Chong, and "Ngiii!! Ang Kati Kati ng Ulo Ko" by Luis Gatmaitan.

Encyclopedias are also available for browsing. Coming soon are the Harry Potter series of books, according to school officials.

A project of the Department of Education, the Library Hub aims to start a repository of books in a school division.

School principals borrow books from the Library Hub and lend them to their students for 30 days. When they return the books, they can borrow a new batch.

A Library Hub is a virtual warehouse of 240 square meters, started from funds the school division obtained from private sponsors, local government units and the DepEd's own budget.

Already, the project has bought P80 million worth of books, mostly from local publishers. Since the project started in 2004, some 30 Library Hubs have opened or will open in July in locations like Baguio, Cabanatuan, Davao and Naga cities.

Corazon Barrientos, education district superintendent in Batanes, told the INQUIRER that without a Library Hub, access to literary masterpieces and local books by students would not be possible.

"Without the Hub, there is no way we could make these books available to our students, unlike schools in the mainland where access is easy. This is actually the first time we've had copies of these books. They will be helpful in improving reading proficiency among our students," Barrientos said.

Reading materials outside the curriculums had been difficult to come by until now, she noted. The system was also convenient since textbooks would be delivered.

Former Education Undersecretary Juan Miguel Luz, who committed himself to the project despite resigning from office in April, said the Library Hub would help inculcate the habit of reading.

Help local publishers

Although literacy in Batanes is high, he said "the problem is expanding from the present literature of textbooks to other reading interests. No one develops a reading habit from textbooks."

Luz also said the DepEd planned to buy P110 million worth of children's books, mostly from local publishers. He explained that a panel of reading experts pored over the books published locally and chose the best ones, as well as those which had won local awards.

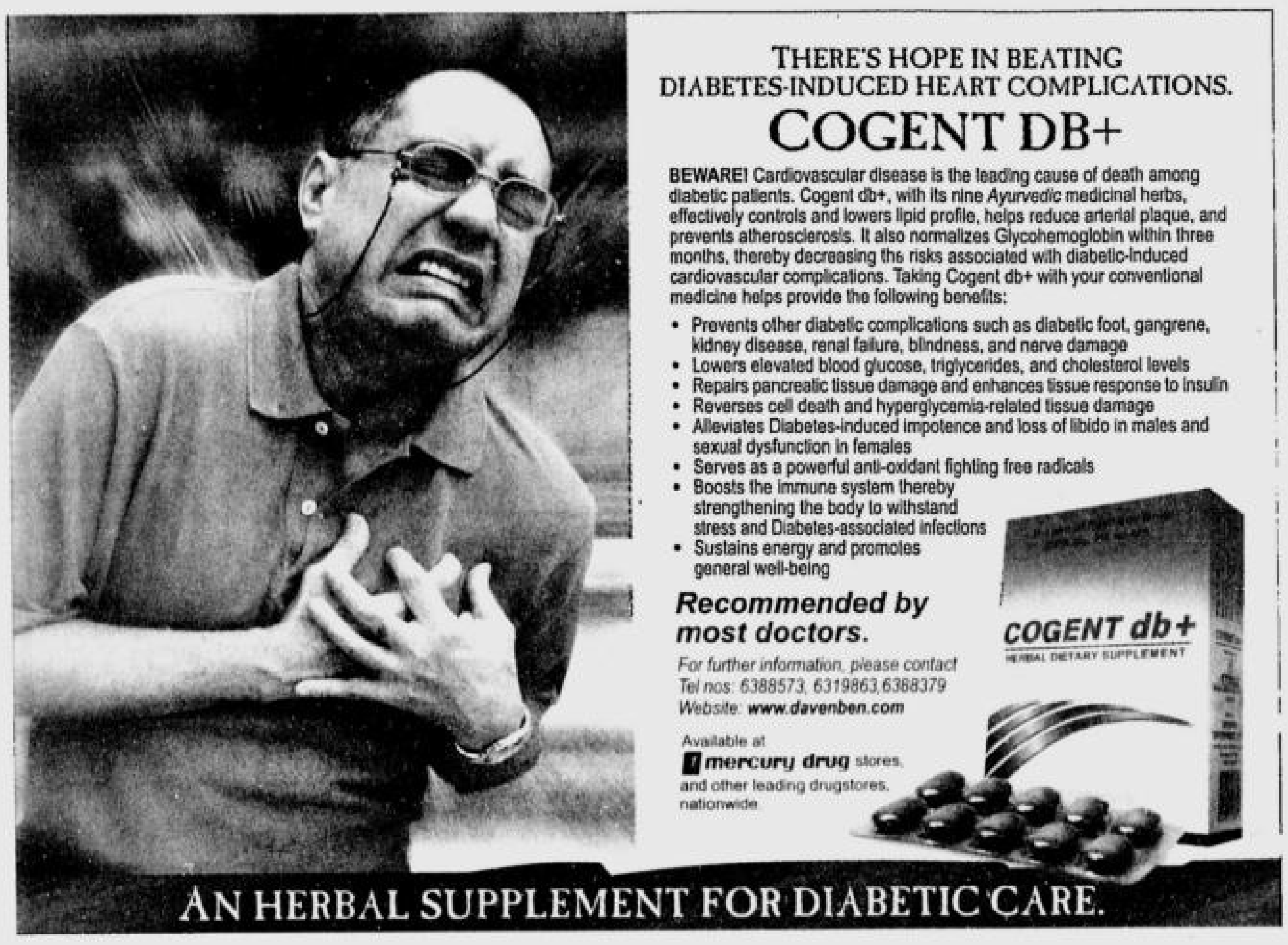
He added that aside from improving reading competencies and developing the reading habit among students, it was the DepEd's way of supporting local publishers.

"We need to support them because buying children's books from foreign publishers is expensive," Luz said.

He explained that the Library Hub was only "a temporary solution" to the problem of low reading achievement rates among students. "The goal is that every school should have its own library."

According to Luz, the department hoped to open 300 Library Hubs in 186 school divisions around the country by 2008. By then, some 15 million books would have been bought, contributing P35 million to the local book publishing industry.

Luz also said he and other private individuals were putting up a Library Hub Foundation which would look for private funds so they could continue building Hubs around the country.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From page A1

MIKEE LEE: Second

GERALD ANDERSON: Third

CLAIRE CABIGUIN: Fourth

white Larry Espinosa gown, Kim was also the crowd favorite in the 3,000-strong Aliw Theater. Her fans cheered her on, brandishing banners in support of the 16-year-old Cebuana and her "love team" partner Gerald.

Just what made Kim stand out from among the 14 housemates, who in turn were narrowed down from over 30,000 hopefuls that auditioned?

PBB director Lauren Dyogi said that it was Kim's natural charisma that endeared her to viewers. "She's wholesome and very pleasant. She laughs a lot. That was how she coped with the stress of their 42-day stay in the PBB house."

Kim reportedly told Randy Dellosa, resident psychologist of PBB, that she didn't have a clue. "I am just happy that my parents and siblings now see me in a different light. My sisters were surprised to learn that I could sing."

(ABS-CBN did not allow the winners to be interviewed by anyone from the press until after their exclusive appearance on "The Buzz" yesterday at 4 p.m.)

Dyogi added that Kim had a wide fan base. "We cannot discount the large Chinese and Visayan votes. Also, a lot of Filipinos are fascinated with Chinese culture because of all the Asian telenovelas."

In the end, Cebuano charm won the day.

"She also sings Chinese," Dyogi pointed out—almost as an afterthought, as if in response to the media critics who had dismissed previous PBB alumni as untalented.

Women power

For the third straight time, woman power reigned on the ABS-CBN reality show after Kim topped the Teen Edition.

In the show's first season, Nene Tamayo emerged as big winner; in the Celebrity Edition, it was Keanna Reeves.

Just what is the significance of PBB's all-female lineup of winners? Is it a reflection of the Kapamilya network's largely female/family-oriented demographic?

Is it a validation of the supposed "matriarchal" nature of Philippine society?

More than a talent search, Dellosa believes the show serves as a "social experiment," a Rorscharch Test if you will, in which "we can study how the public is reacting to people-watching."

It's not just an experiment in voyeurism, he said, but it can also be a study on the voting patterns of Filipino televiewers.

"If you read the PBB forum online, the reasons the viewers post for favoring certain housemates can be trivial," Dellosa points out. "It can range from something as shallow as good looks to as obvious as regional affiliation."

Reformat

Dyogi also revealed that PBB was going to be reformatted into a talent search, called "Pinoy Dream Academy," in its next full (three-month) season in August.

This is probably the network's answer to "Philippine Idol," which premieres on ABC 5 in July.

"Pinoy Dream Academy is actually a separate franchise, also from Endemol, the same Dutch company behind Big Brother," Dyogi explained.

"In London, it's called 'Fame Academy.' In France, it's 'Star Academy.' In Spain and Italy, 'La Academia.' It's a lot like PBB in the sense that the students live together. But the difference is that they will be trained to be performers. Big Brother won't be around. Instead, there'll be a principal and different instructors who will give workshops on singing, dancing and other aspects of performance."

But will "Pinoy Dream Academy" go head-to-head with "RP Idol"?

RP Idol, look out

"I think 'RP Idol' will just air twice a week, but 'Pinoy Dream Academy' will come out nightly," Dyogi said. "We just want to give PBB a rest this year so that viewers will miss it. We want to protect the PBB franchise."

Sheldon Bailey, supervising producer of Freemantle Media ("Idol" producer) and consulting producer of "RP Idol" told the INQUIRER in an earlier interview: "The Idol franchise has been successful in 35 countries. We are confident that it'll wipe out copycat shows anywhere in the world."

Roberto Barreiro, managing director for TV operations, sales and marketing of ABC 5, asserted that in the Philippines, "Big Brother" had "evolved from a naughty, almost soft-porn show (in Europe) into a charity, socially-relevant program.

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Correction

IN YESTERDAY'S ISSUE, A STORY ON PAGE A3—"SIMPLE RITES mark Ka Teroy burial"—misstated the names of the officiating priests at the funeral Mass for Sotero Llamas. Their correct names are Msgr. Ramon C. Tronqued—not Tonqued—and Fr. Rudyard—not Richard—Base.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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1. Jenkins AL, *et al.* Depression of the glycemic index by high levels of B-glucan fiber in two functional foods tested in type 2 diabetes *Europ J Clin Nut* 2002; 56: 622-28.2. Evidence-based nutritional approaches to the treatment and prevention of diabetes mellitus. Diabetes and Nutrition Study Group (DNSG) of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD). *Nutr Metab Cardiovasc Dis* 2003; 14: 373-394. 3. Position Statement. American Diabetes Association, *Diabetes Care* 2002, (1): 25 202-12. NEST0035. 4. Levin JH , Reed NW: The effect on hunger and satiety of slowing the absorption of glucose : relationship with gastric emptying and postprandial blood glucose and insulin responses. *Appetite* 25, 89-96, 1995. 5. Howarth NC.*et al.* Dietary fibre and weight regulation. *Nutr Rev* 2001; 59(5): 129-139.

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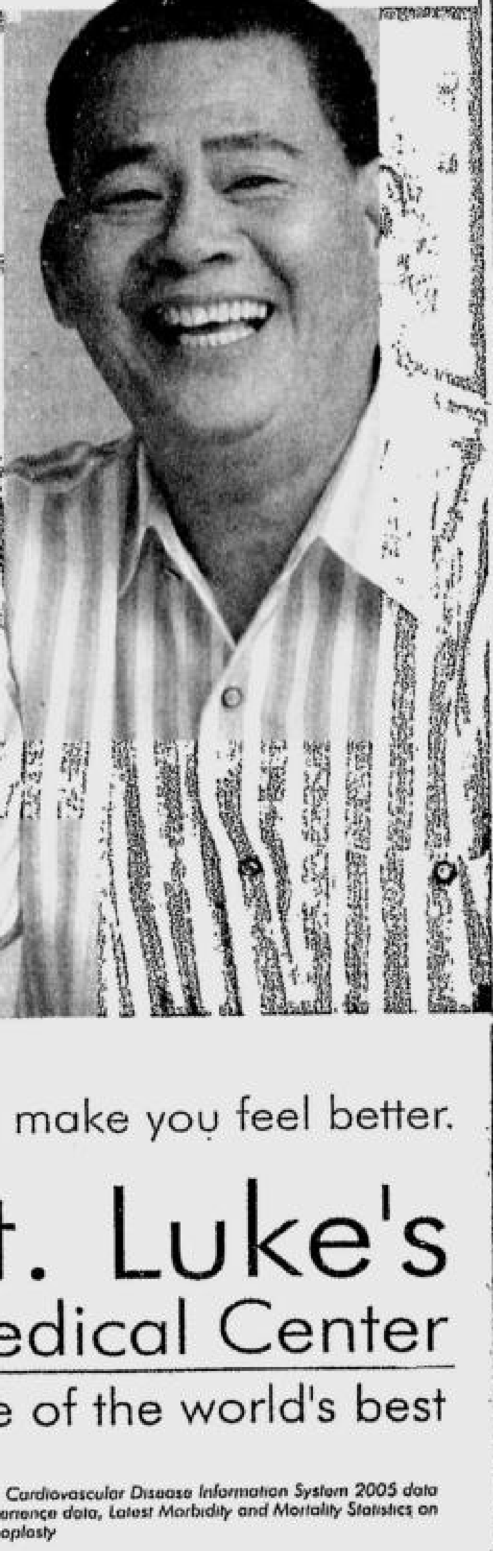

"St. Luke's is very close to my heart," says Mr. Laudato. Physicians in Guam referred his wife Amelia to St. Luke's Heart Institute, where she underwent angioplasty and abdominal aneurysm surgery while Mr. Laudato himself availed of the Cardiac Executive Check-up.

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He reveals that an increasing number of people in Guam and Micronesia swear by the excellent patient care provided by St. Luke's. He says that his wife, an allied health professional who works at Guam Memorial Hospital, heard of the good work done at St. Luke's from patients, physicians and colleagues. *"So when it was time for us to decide where to seek off-island medical treatment, we were able to confidently choose St. Luke's."*

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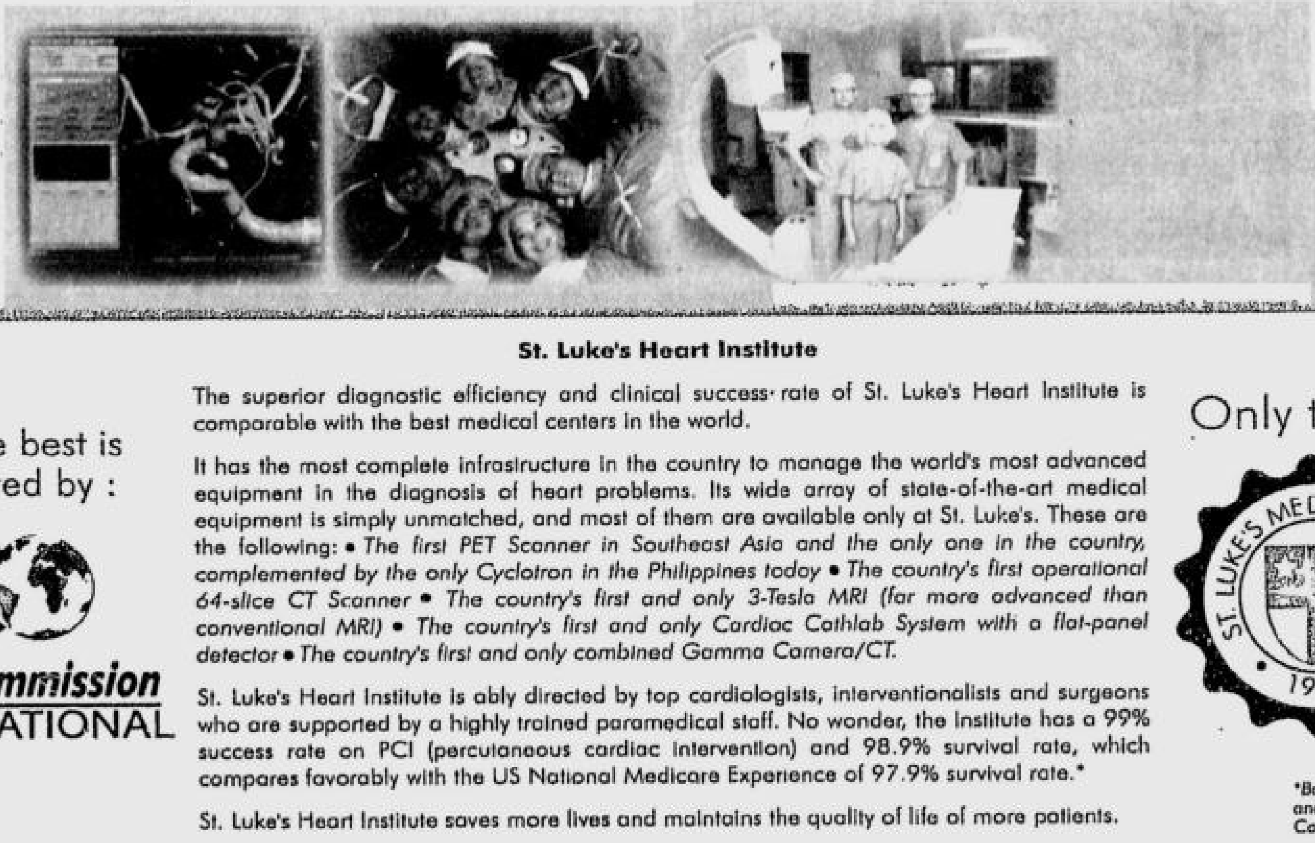

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Customs take up 36% in 1st five months

By Leila B. Salaverria

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The January to May 2006 collection figure was up by P4.1 billion or nearly 6 percent higher than the collection target of P71.7 billion for the same period.

This was the fifth straight month that the BOC, one of the biggest revenue generating agencies of the government, exceeded its collection target.

For the month of May, the bureau registered P17.218 billion in collections, up by P702 million or 4 percent higher than the month's target of P16.516 billion.

In a statement, Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales attributed the bureau's performance to the district collectors who had met their own target earnings, describing their feat as "heroic."

Heroic performance

"I salute the district collectors who have consistently exceeded their targets and heeded the call of government for a rabid collection effort.

Their heroic performance is a testament to their professionalism and dedication to the service," Morales said.

At the same time, he warned collectors in underperforming districts that they faced reassignment or removal if they consistently failed to meet their targets.

"We have to ensure that successful collection drives are achieved in all ports across the country," Morales said.

The BOC has been tasked to collect nearly P200 billion in 2006.

Among the top performing collection districts in May were the ports of Manila and Batangas.

The Port of Manila posted a P6.411-billion collection, 9.5 percent higher than its P5.857-billion target. The Port of Batangas collected P3.427 billion, 25 percent higher than its P2.739-billion target. Also meeting their targets were the ports of San Fernando, Iloilo, Legaspi, Tacloban and Surigao.

Surpassed its target

From January to May this year, the Port of Manila registered total collections of P26.711 billion, accounting for 35 percent of the bureau's total collections so far this year.

It was the fifth straight month this year the Port of Manila had surpassed its collection target.

Among the three Manila ports, only the Port of Manila had exceeded its targets since Horacio P. Suansing Jr. took over its helm in the middle of last year.

On the other hand, the BOC identified the Manila International Container Port as one of the notable underperformers. The MICP failed to meet its P5.065-billion target for May, collecting only P3.887 billion and incurring a P1.178-billion shortfall. Also failing to meet their targets were the ports of Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Zamboanga, Davao, Clark, Subic and the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Court upholds falsification raps vs ex-Caloocan exec

By Nelson F. Flores

THE SANDIGANBAYAN FIRST DIVISION HAS upheld the 59 counts of falsification charges filed by the Office of the Ombudsman against former Caloocan City chief accountant Edna V. Centeno involving P29.22 million in city government funds in 1995.

In a six-page resolution, the antigraft court junked Centeno's motion seeking deferment of the proceedings due to the alleged failure of the Ombudsman to conduct a proper preliminary investigation.

Centeno claimed she was denied due process when prosecutors filed the case based on the investigation of a separate offense of alleged violation of the State Audit Code for which she received the 59 indictments now pending in the Sandiganbayan Second Division.

But the court junked Centeno's argument noting that the two criminal offenses were clearly mentioned in orders sent to her by the Ombudsman.

It pointed out that Graft Investigation Officer II Rogelio Ringpis even notified the accused that she was facing possible indictment for malversation, falsification of official documents and graft in orders dated Aug. 11 and Sept. 22, 1997.

Based on an inquiry conducted by the Commission on Audit, Centeno was found to have illegally approved cash advances by delinquent disbursement officers when she certified that they had liquidated the funds previously released to them by the city government.

According to the COA, Centeno signed a total of 37 disbursement vouchers for Ramoncito Lising and 22 for Nestor P. Torres falsely declaring that the two no longer had unliquidated cash advances.

As this developed, state prosecutors asked the Sandiganbayan Second Division Friday to drop the criminal charges against former Malabon Councilor Payapa Ona after she agreed to turn state witness in the P122-million graft case against former Mayor Amado S. Vicencio and five others.

Assistant Special Prosecutor III Rodrigo V. Coquia told the antigraft court that Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez had approved the discharge of Ona from the case since she was instrumental in the filing of the graft case against Vicencio in 2002.

Complainant Edilberto Torres, a former councilor, said Ona had personal knowledge of the alleged anomalies surrounding the award of the P122-million contract for the construction of the Malabon municipal hall in 1999 to an unqualified bidder.

Vicencio, as municipal mayor, was the concurrent chair of the prequalification, bids and awards committee for the construction project.

His codefendants were committee members Ma. Lida Sarmiento, Pio Dadula, Virdeo Cruz, Lauro B. Borja and Ernesto V. Pabustan.

Solon laments tree loss

THE ESCALATING prices of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) could be the greatest threat to the country's remaining forest cover, a Mindanao lawmaker said yesterday.

Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri of Bukidnon, author of the biofuels bill, warned that "costly LPG has made us a nation of woodcutters," noting that six million households burned wood three times a day to cook food prior to the rise in LPG prices.

"With the country's primary forest cover down to its last 800,000 hectares—or 2.7 percent of total land area—the government should be worried sick," Zubiri said.

He then urged the government to institutionalize the planting of *tuba-tuba* (scientific name: *Jatropha curcas*) to avert the further dwindling of forest cover.

"To prevent the mass murder of trees and their conversion into firewood is to encourage people to grow *tuba-tuba*, the fast-growing shrub whose nut can be processed into cooking or car fuel," Zubiri said.

He urged government to entice people to apply for agroforesty contracts as mandated by Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Administrative Order 2005-25. *Michael Lim Ubac*

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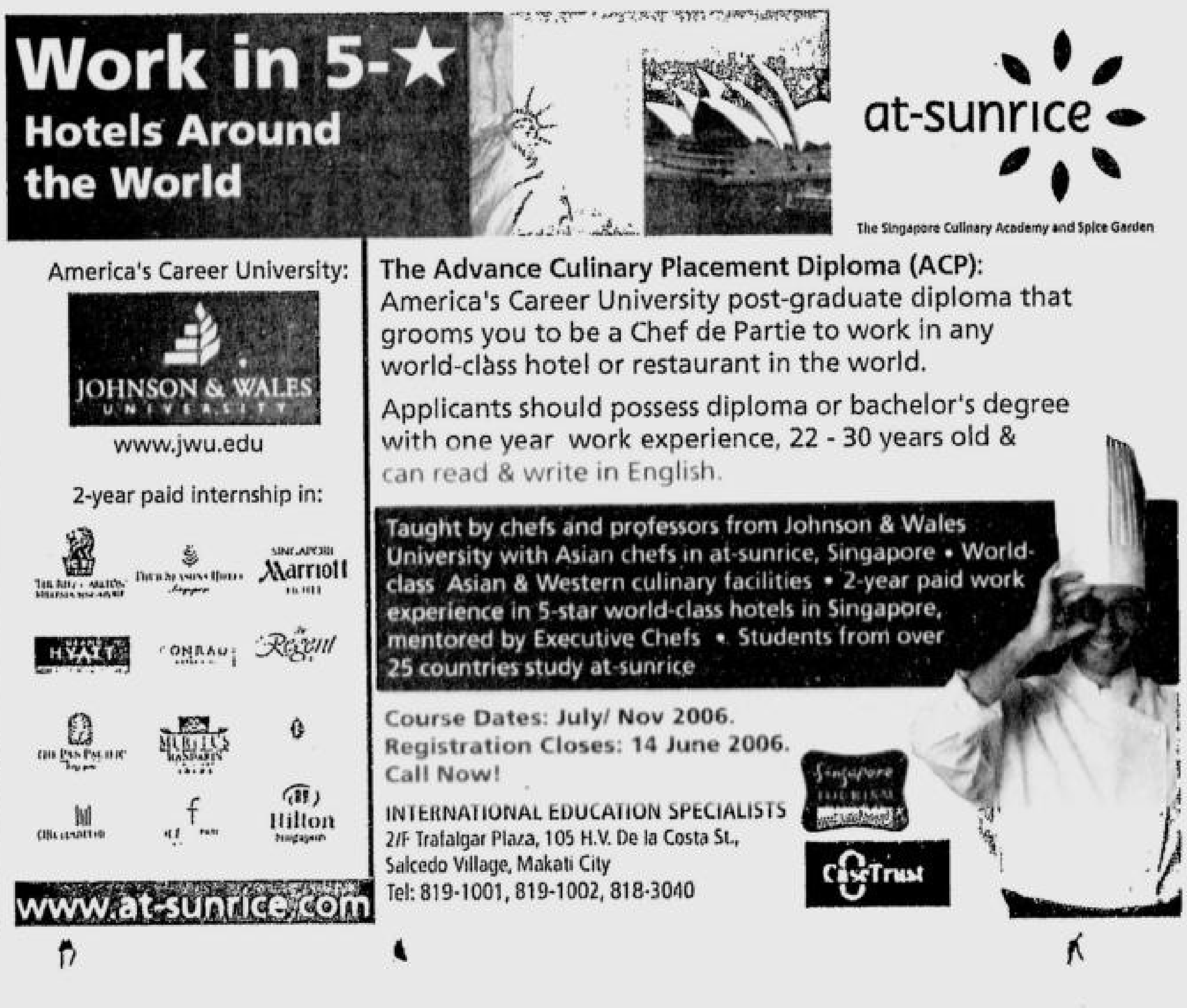
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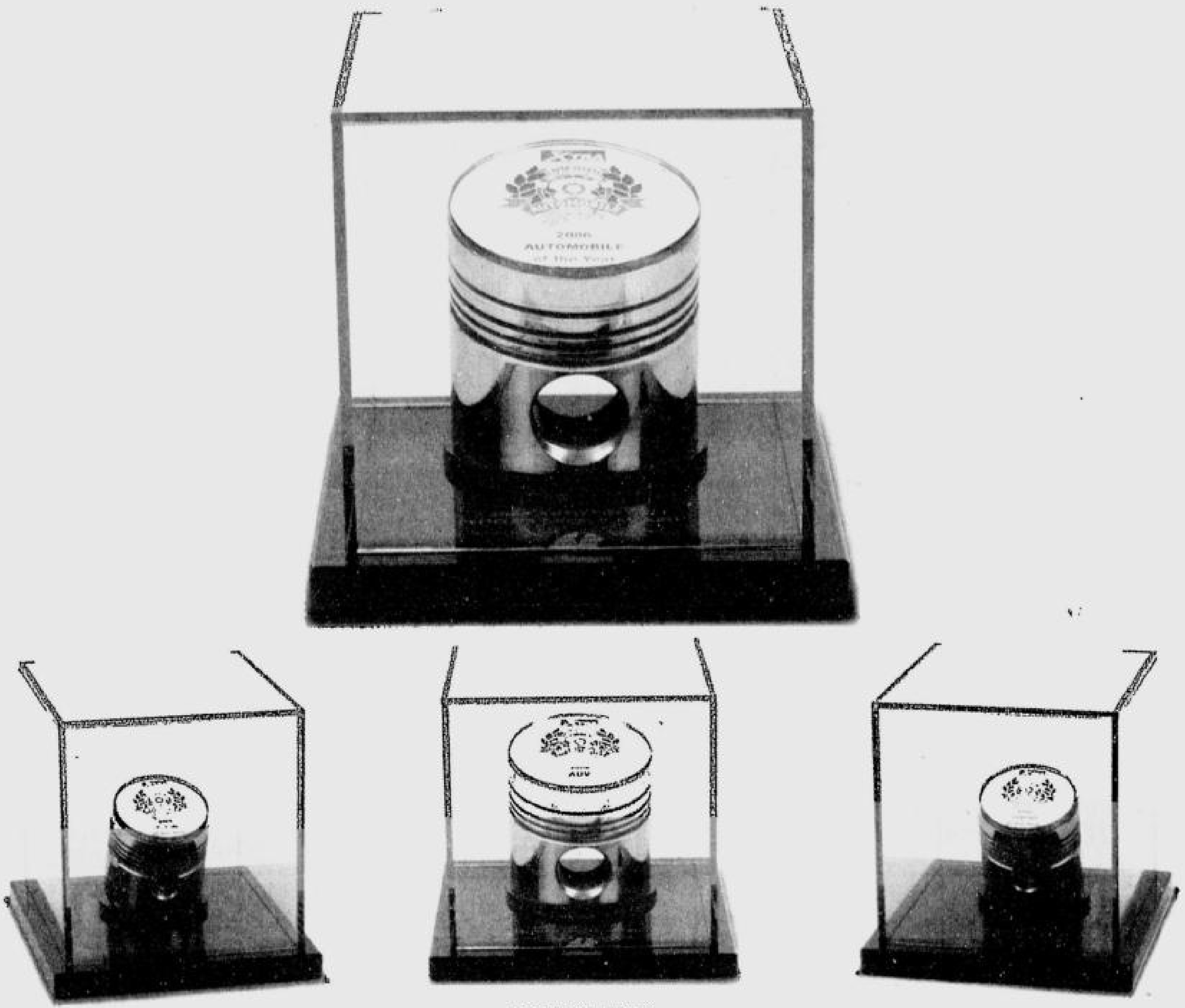

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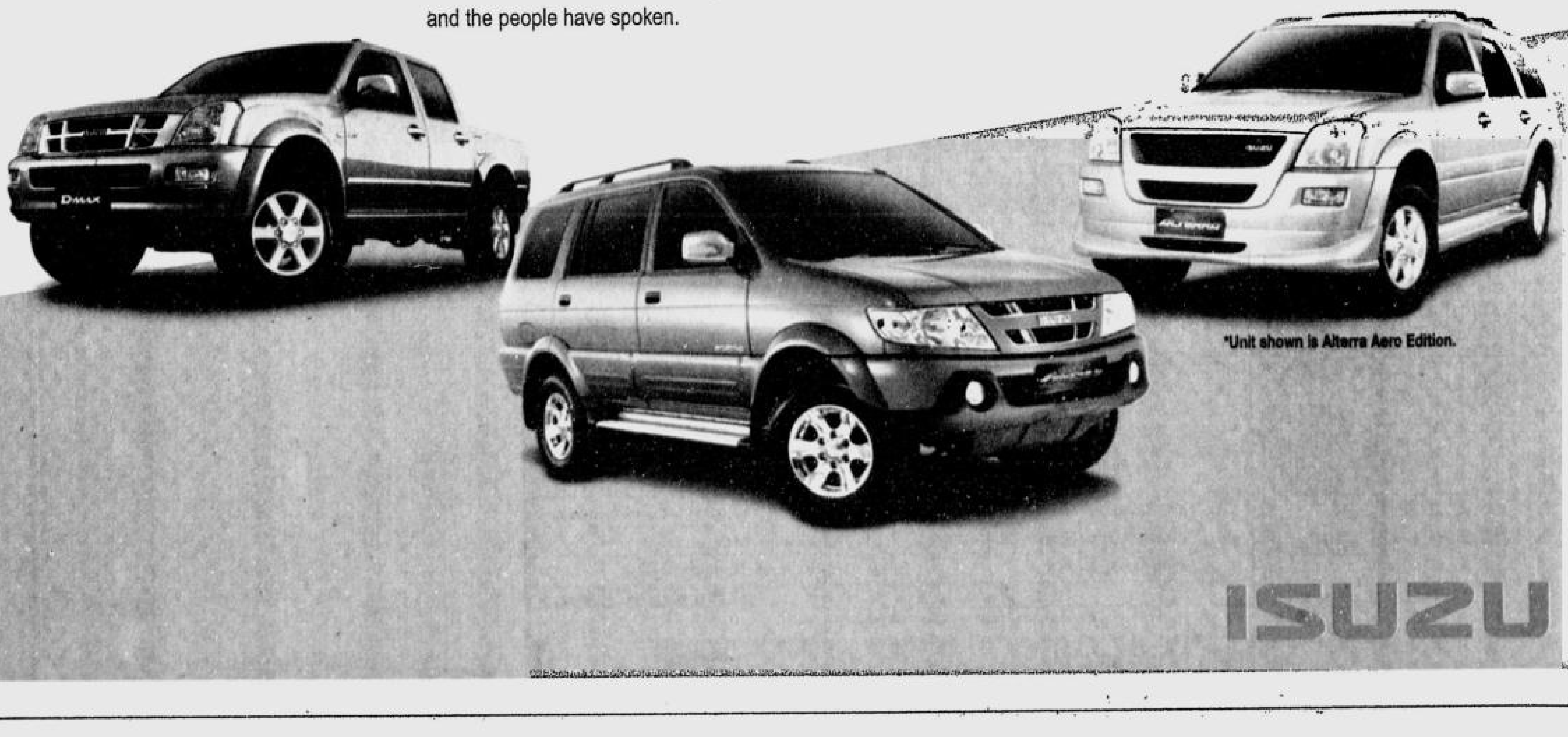

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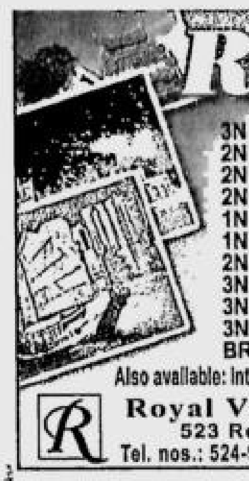

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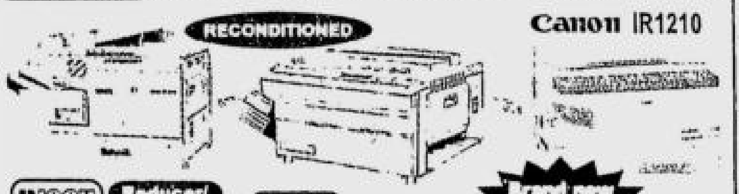

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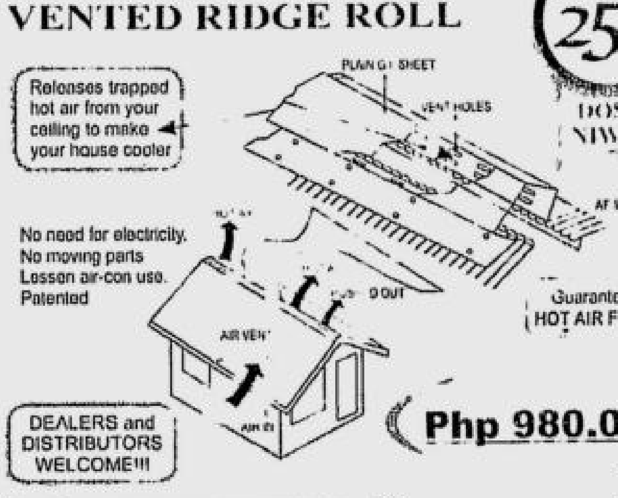

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Cruz: Church stomped 'Da Vinci'

By Christian V. Esguerra

A SENIOR CATHOLIC bishop yesterday declared the triumph of Christianity over "The Da Vinci Code," the Hollywood adaptation of the best-selling novel that assaults Christian belief, which began showing in the country more than two weeks ago.

"Christianity is exactly the same. The Church is still as it was before," said Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, former president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

"After so much international hype and so much local fuss, the 'Da Vinci Code' film is now seen as a nonissue. There was so much debate, worry and reservation over nothing."

Jesus Christ, whose virginity and divinity were questioned in the book by Dan Brown, is still the same "today, yesterday and forever," despite the attacks from both the novel and the film, Cruz said.

"Fiction about Christ and the Church comes and goes but their truth remains," he said. "The Catholic Church enjoys the certitude to last till the end of time."

But the 2,000-year-old faith wasn't the only "winner" in the controversy generated by Brown and his Hollywood collaborators, he said.

Even if the film didn't live up to hype, Cruz said Brown and Sony Pictures, which produced the movie, were also easily winners, raking in millions of dollars in profit.

"One thing is certain—an author made a killing, a film producer has gone to the bank laughing," he said.

The film, starring Oscar winner Tom Hanks, was still a hit even if it failed to impress critics, including those who attended its premier at Cannes.

Despite the lukewarm reaction to the film, Cruz warned that more attacks on the faith would be coming from people like Brown, a former public school teacher who insisted on the accuracy of his novel.

"Let Catholics be well aware that their faith is some 2,000 years old. It has been, and will still be, tested by all kinds of intrigues and falsities. But their faith will continue ever to guide them toward truth and life," he said.

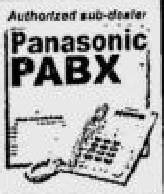
Brown in his book floated the old theory that Jesus had married Mary Magdalene and that they begot children.

The Jesus-Magdalene bloodline continued today and was being protected by a secret group called the Priory of Sion, he wrote.

Biblical experts and secular history had dismissed this theory more than two decades ago.

Cruz cautioned authors like Brown against "deliberately offending Christian sensibility."

"There is a whale of difference between wholesome fiction and disrespectful novel," he said. "Even the flag of the Philippines deserves rightful deference. Surely the person of Christ has due claim to due reverence."



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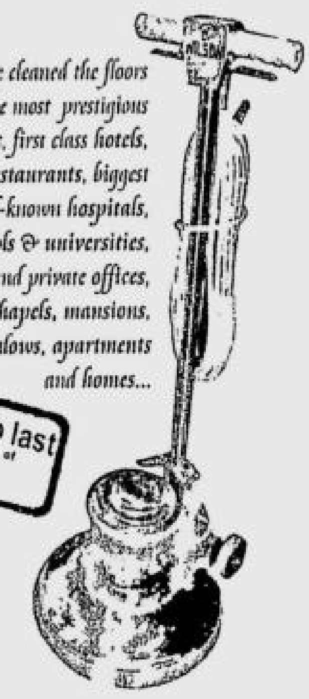

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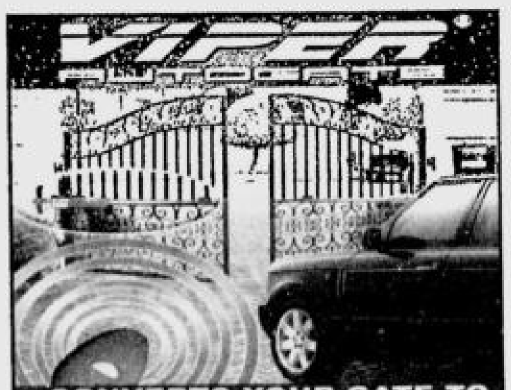

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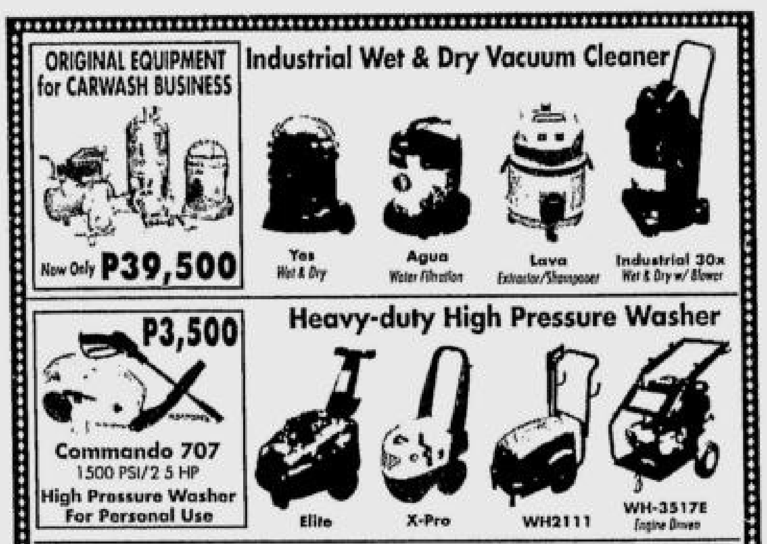

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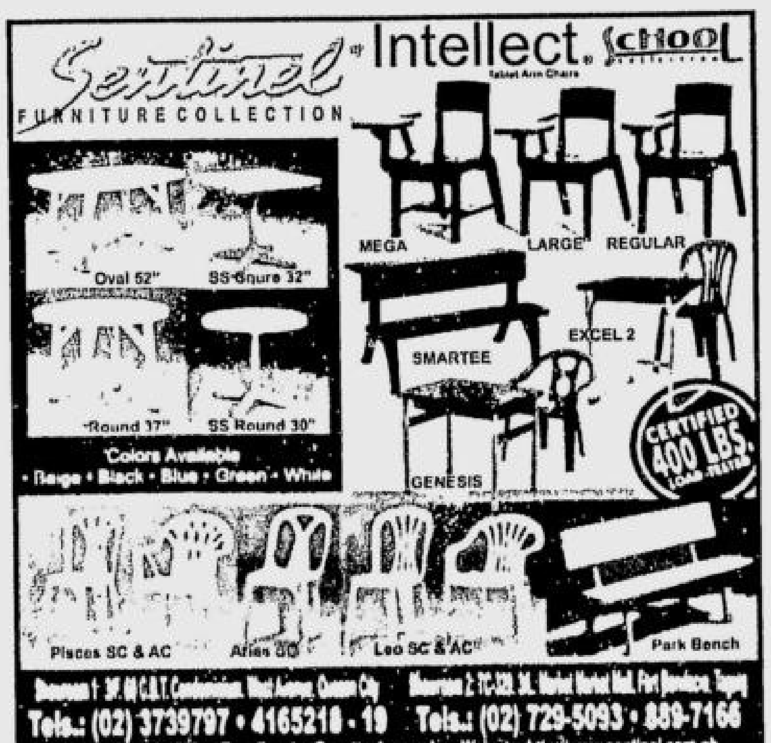

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Tin-pot dictator rises from Edsa II

From page A1

Once again, the government is at war with the communist movement, 17 years after the collapse of communist regimes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

This trend represents a counterflow of Philippine democracy against the historical tide of democratization during the past three decades.

And it raises questions among academics studying global political trends over the direction of Philippine democracy and over whether the Philippines is trying to chart out a neoauthoritarian rule in Southeast Asia, as a repressive regime without the formal uniform of the military junta in Burma (Myanmar).

The Philippines has come under recent strong criticism from international human rights organizations for the rising toll of killings of political activists by suspected paramilitary death squads and of journalists by unidentified hit men.

This wave of extrajudicial killings has tagged the Philippines as the most hazardous spot on earth for journalists after Iraq, a war zone.

Although the Philippines is not a war zone, it is a country that is actually in a state of war, between its government and the legal and aboveground communist movement and the members of the press.

Filipinos delude themselves into asserting they have the "freest press" in Asia, but their claim is undermined by the fact that an exceptionally large number of Filipino journalists (more than 70 since 1986) had been assassinated while doing their job.

On the other hand, much fewer journalists, if any, had been murdered in other Southeast Asian democracies (for example, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia), whose media have been more restricted than the more free-wheeling and exuberant Philippine press.

International and Filipino human rights organizations have not accused the Philippine government of being directly responsible for instigating the extrajudicial executions.

It is being taken to task for fostering a "climate of impunity" that is shielding death squads associated with security forces suspected by human rights groups as behind the murders.

Marked contrast

Whether or not the government is directly involved, the result is the same—the wave of extralegal executions is unabated.

The indifference of the government to mounting calls to make clear that it is not tolerating the murders and is determined to put a stop to the murders is a marked contrast to the readiness of Ms Arroyo to exercise the extraordinary powers of the presidency to crack down on the press and leaders of the legal Left when she declared a state of national emergency in February.

The declaration followed the crushing of a coup attempt that Ms Arroyo had blamed on an alleged conspiracy among mutinous officers, the Left and some members of the political opposition, abetted by the press.

In her propensity to use emergency powers to crush perceived political enemies and to save her regime rocked by political crisis and by accenting repressive measures, Ms Arroyo has undergone a drastic change in her method from the more democratic approaches of her earlier year in the presidency.

Closet dictator

There are only three precedents to Ms Arroyo's declaration of national emergency—Elpidio Quirino in 1949 during the Huk rebellion, Marcos in 1972 when he declared martial law, and Corazon Aquino in 1989 after a bloody coup attempt.

Fidel Ramos declared in 1992 a limited national emergency, not to crush rebellion but to end an electricity shortage crisis that threatened economic paralysis.

There is little to indicate in the political career of Ms Arroyo that she has authoritarian inclinations, that she is a closet tin-pot dictator and is an admirer either of Marcos or of Lee Kuan Yew. Compared with Marcos, Ms Arroyo is a halfhearted despot.

Ms Arroyo did not have the methodical preparation that Marcos invested in preparing the ground for martial law for two years before 1972. Unlike Marcos in 1972, she did not have in February the solid support and control of the military.

Ms Arroyo declared the emergency sitting on a divided military, as shown by the move of mutinous Marine officers to declare withdrawal of support from her administration.

No fair tradeoff

Unlike Lee Kuan Yew, the Arroyo administration does not rest on the rock-like foundation of legitimacy of Lee's long-serving regime built on the parliamentary electoral dominance of the People's Action Party, the competence of Lee in economic management that transformed Singapore into an Asian economic miracle, and the untarnished honesty of his government.

Because of this solid foundation of legitimacy, Lee could demand from the Singaporeans a tradeoff of their political liberties in exchange for an effective, stable and performing government. Ms Arroyo had little to offer to Filipinos for them to cede some of their liberties in exchange for nil benefits.

The deviation of Ms Arroyo from her previous path of consensus democracy is a disappointment and comes as an utter shock to Filipinos because few Filipino presidents have risen to power with more democratic credentials and intellectual preparation than her.

Somewhere along the way

Ms Arroyo received an overwhelming electoral mandate when she topped her first senatorial election. She received more votes in the vice presidential election than the phenomenally popular Joseph Estrada in the 1998 election.

She first acceded to the presidency in 2001 as a gift of people power. An electoral mandate in 2004 should have crowned her ascent to the peak of Philippine democracy.

But then, something wrong happened along the way.

What has emerged from the turn of events is a national tragedy—the transformation of a prodigy of democracy into a failed would-be dictator.

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2 cloned US mules make successful racing debuts

From page A1

successful debuts on Saturday in what scientists billed as the first professional competition between clones of any kind.

The two cloned mules will compete against each other—and six naturally bred animals—for an $8,500 purse in the finals of their bracket on Sunday at the 20th annual Winnemucca Mule Race, Show & Draft Horse Challenge.

Idaho Gem covered his 350-yard (318.5-meter) sprint on Saturday in 21.817 seconds, winning by 1 1/4 lengths over five rivals.

Idaho Star was less than three hundredths of a second faster, finishing in 21.790 seconds to win by a half length over four competitors.

"For both to win first, it is awesome," said Don Jacklin, an Idaho businessman who helped finance the cloning project.

"I think it is going to open a lot of eyes as far as cloning is concerned. I think the race experience will go a long way to show what cloning can do," added Jacklin.

The two clones were born three years ago and carry identical DNA taken from a fetus produced by the same parents that sired a champion mule racer. A mule is usually the sterile offspring of a donkey father and a horse mother.

Researchers on the cloning team said Idaho Gem and Idaho Star had been separated for two years and trained separately. Watching how they perform against each other will offer insight into the role played by environmental variables, such as diet and training regimens, in developing mules.

Gordon Woods, the University of Idaho scientist who created the clones, said he was pleased the clones passed their first major test.

Woods noted that the historic cloning of Dolly the sheep in 1997 decreased her strength and agility.

"It says to me very clearly that the technology by which we cloned them appears to have not decreased their athletic performance," he said. "For me, it was a huge milestone achievement on a long uphill climb."

A record crowd of 1,000 stood and cheered on Saturday as the mules raced down the stretch of an oval dirt track in front of a wooden grandstand in the rural Western town where members of Butch Cassidy's Wild Bunch robbed a bank in 1900.

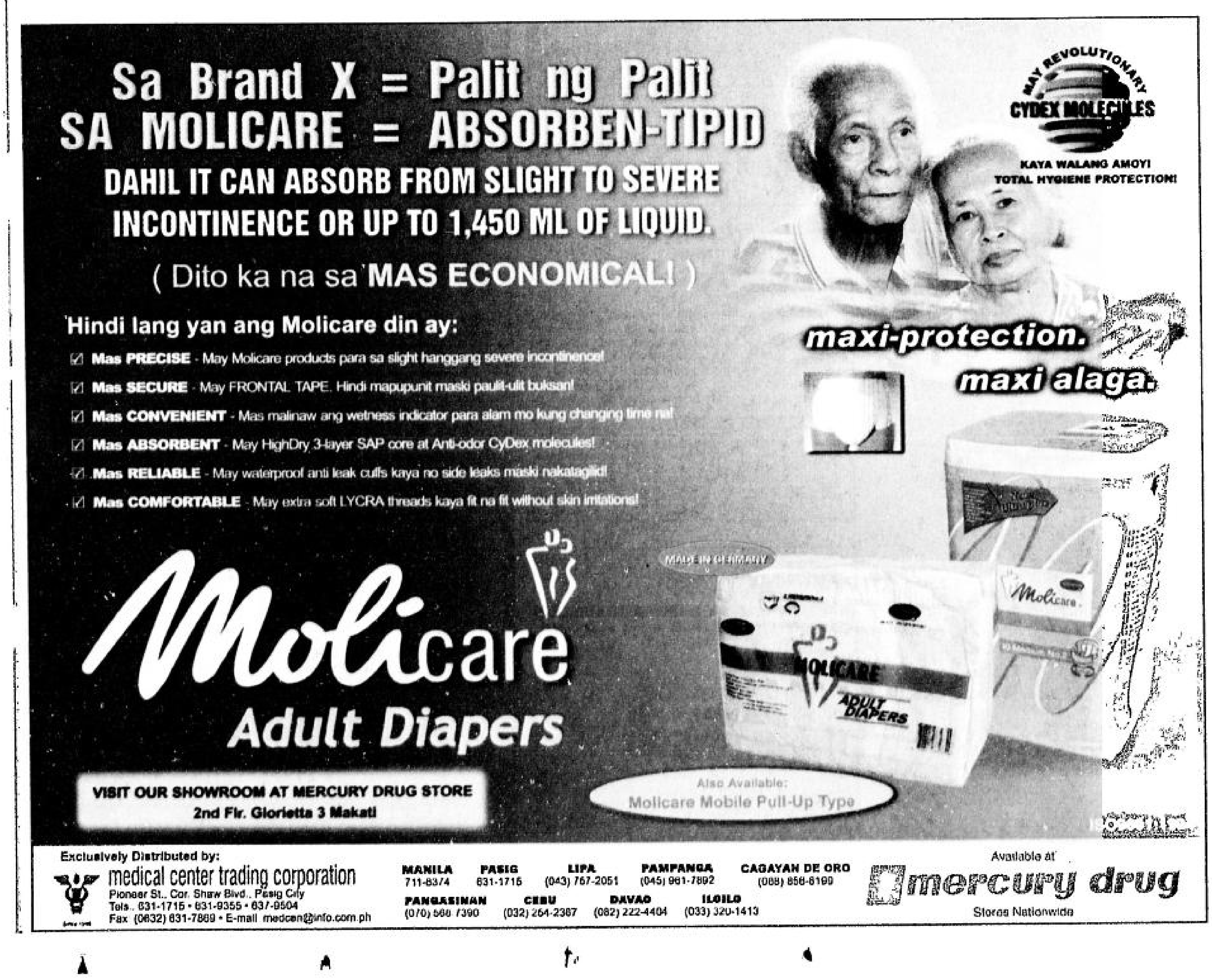
Ron Roark, 62, of Reno, placed $5 bets on each clone to win, picking up $9.50 for Idaho Star and $8 for Idaho Gem.

"I wanted both to win because I'm a techie geek and I like the fact that techie geeks are making advances on cloning," Roark said. "A lot of good to human health can come as a result of it."

Bill Sims, 55, of Winnemucca, said he bet against the clones "to prove nature knows best."

"I have doubts about cloning," he said.

Winnemucca, about 257 km northeast of Reno, is the first stop on a professional mule racing circuit that will shift to county fairs in California through the summer. AP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Group lists 168 leftists missing

From page A1

President Macapagal-Arroyo in February.

"Today, June 4, as nations observe the day of the disappeared, we join the families of those abducted by government forces in their demand to surface the victims and be given protection of the law," Karapatan said.

Limjoco had been involved with the Left, but his son, Glenn, told the INQUIRER that his father was no longer connected with cause-oriented groups and had been engaged in the business of processing stone-washed jeans.

Glenn said that he and his father were last together in Pampanga on May 8 and that they were supposed to meet again the following day in an SM mall in Metro Manila.

"But he never showed up," Glenn said. "I tried calling his cellular phone but it was already turned off."

No response

Karapatan had asked the military and the police if any of their units had taken Limjoco in but had not gotten a substantial response from them.

Militant groups have blamed security forces, particularly the military, for the recent wave of killings of political activists in the country.

Karapatan listed 679 civilians as having been arbitrarily killed during Ms Arroyo's presidency, and the victims included 301 activists and 378 people with no known political affiliations.

The INQUIRER tally, covering members of militant organizations, including human rights and other advocacy groups, had at least 224 militants killed during the period.

The left-leaning Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) yesterday released a "primer" on the killings to show it had a basis for blaming the military.

The primer recounted incidents that, it said, showed that those who had been murdered had been tailed or monitored by military-type men before the killings occurred.

Soldiers allegedly frequented the home of Marcelino Beltran, reportedly a witness to the killing of peasants during the Hacienda Luisita massacre about two years ago, before he was killed in December 2004.

Beltran was supposed to have testified in the Senate on the hacienda killings, the primer said.

It said another activist, Victor Concepcion of Anakpawis, had reported to his colleagues about the presence of suspected military agents near his home in Mexico, Pampanga.

Shortly after, he too was killed.

On the other hand, Bayan Muna member Ricardo Uy was killed inside his rice mill in Sorsogon City last year after a radio program run by the Philippine Army tagged him as an "emerging leader" of the New People's Army, according to the primer.

In another case, Marcelino Fabula of Anakpawis in Laguna was supposedly interrogated by a military officer days before a militiaman with close ties to the soldier shot him dead.

"The Left is being used by the Arroyo government as a test case on how to silence the entire nation," said Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo. "The entire nation is next."

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, in a statement, said his office was working with other government agencies to identify the perpetrators of "the seemingly endless slayings of political activists and members of media to bring them to justice."

"I am greatly concerned over what is happening," Gonzales said. "Some quarters blame the government, saying these are part of a plan to declare martial law. Nothing could be further from the truth. The government will not benefit from these killings."

He stressed that "only a government which wishes to self-destruct would initiate chaos through mass slayings."

With a report from Michael Lim Ubac

Gov't sees win over Reds in 10 years

SINGAPORE—THE PHILIPPINES can defeat communist guerrillas within a decade by spending more on national security and social infrastructure, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz said Sunday.

"There is reason to be optimistic that the communist insurgency can be resolved within the next six to 10 years," Cruz said in a speech at a defense ministers' meeting in Singapore. ***(See photo on Page A24.)***

The communist New People's Army has been waging a rebellion for more than three decades.

Cruz said success in permanently defeating the group depended on sustaining economic growth and increasing spending on social services and security.

"Our experience has shown that insurgents and terrorists often take advantage of people in impoverished communities in conflict areas to recruit adherents, gain support or secure safe havens," he said.

"These provide insurgents and terrorists opportunities that they are quick to exploit," Cruz said. "This is the vicious cycle we aim to stop once and for all."

The Philippine economy grew by a strong 5.5 percent last year, allowing improvements to the internal security forces and equipment purchases to enhance their mobility, firepower and communications, Cruz said.

Already, the NPA's manpower has fallen by 13 percent a year since 2001, Cruz said. *AP*

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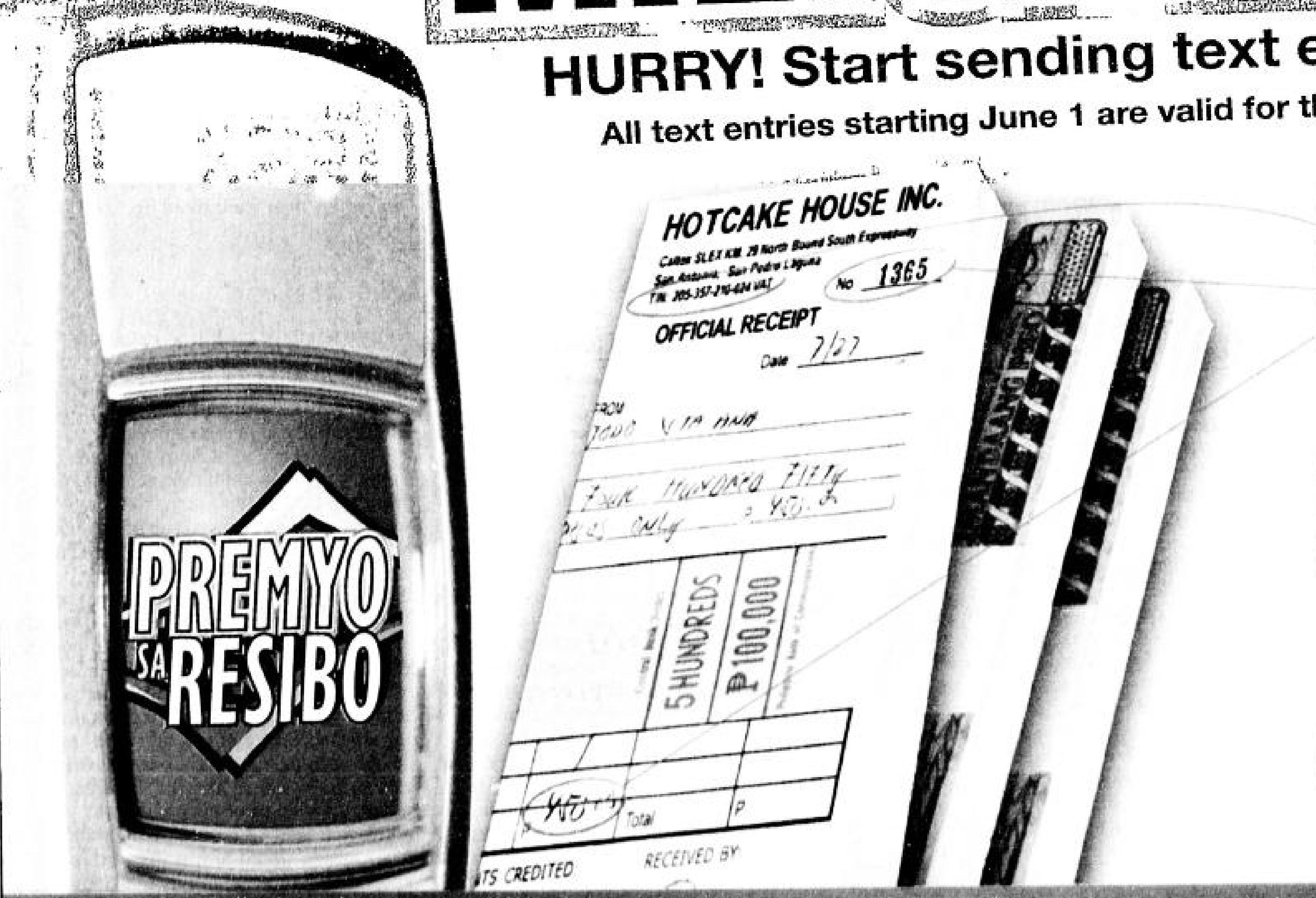

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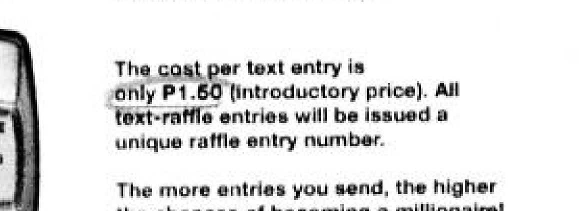

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Learning from outbursts

EDITORIAL

IT IS A CONTINUING MYSTERY. HOW CAN A professional politician with political credentials like the President—a bottomless capacity for campaigning, a track record that includes topping a Senate race, a work ethic even the opposition must acknowledge—commit amateurish political mistakes? The much-talked-about outburst directed at acting Education Secretary Fe Hidalgo, for example. Surely President Macapagal-Arroyo must have known that official meetings open to the public are forms of political theater; the goal is not to enlighten or even educate the public, but to assure that action is being taken. Meetings like last Wednesday's, which discussed the government's preparations for the start of the new academic year, are essentially confidence-building measures.

But the President's public humiliation of the education official undermined the very public confidence she was trying to build, because it focused renewed attention on the issue of classroom shortage. Instead of being reassured that the Arroyo administration was doing all it can to meet the classroom problem, the public was left wondering whether the President was lying about both problem and solution.

The truth is, the country's educational system is straining under the combined weight of a fast-growing population and an inadequately funded bureaucracy. In fact, the DepEd assumes that public school enrolment grows at 3 percent a year—that is, faster than the annual rate of increase in our population. (Enrolment growth in public high schools is even faster, in part because economic realities have forced more middle-income families to withdraw their children from private schools and place them in the public school system.)

It bears repeating. Based on the President's own preferred classroom-to-student ratio of 1:50 per shift, Hidalgo gave the correct estimate. The public school system will suffer a shortage of 6,832 classrooms.

But that estimate is based on other estimates. The DepEd projects that 12.4 million students will enrol in grade school this year, and 5.5 million in high school. It is possible, therefore, that the classroom shortage is worse than projected—if, as is actually quite likely, more students are enrolled for the academic year that starts today.

But classroom shortage is not the only recurring scandal in education. The failure of the majority of grade school students to make it to high school, either because of academic deficiencies or financial considerations (despite the Constitution's promise of free education until high school), is a warning sign of the system's progressively ill health; unfortunately, the alarm went off many years ago, and today almost nobody minds it. It is simply part of the noise in the background.

And yet, despite millions of fewer students in high school, the classroom shortage is worse at the secondary stage. At the 1:50 ratio per shift, the country's public high schools lack more classrooms (3,778) than do public grade schools (3,054). With public high school enrolment growth estimated at a much higher 5 percent, the President's emphasis on double-shifting only obscures the bigger problem. The (relative) few who make it to high school face worse odds.

This is a problem that transcends partisan political interests, or indeed the limits of politics itself. The private sector is a vital part of the solution; many NGOs have helped build new classrooms, for example, and private schools have welcomed the DepEd's contracting scheme (where public school students are awarded a P4,000-a-year subsidy that allows them to study in private schools with available classroom space).

Unfortunately, the President's outburst does not inspire confidence among other possible stakeholders in education. It has drawn attention to the administration's tendency to politicize even the education sector. There's a lesson to be learned right there, for aspiring politicians as well as graduating ones.

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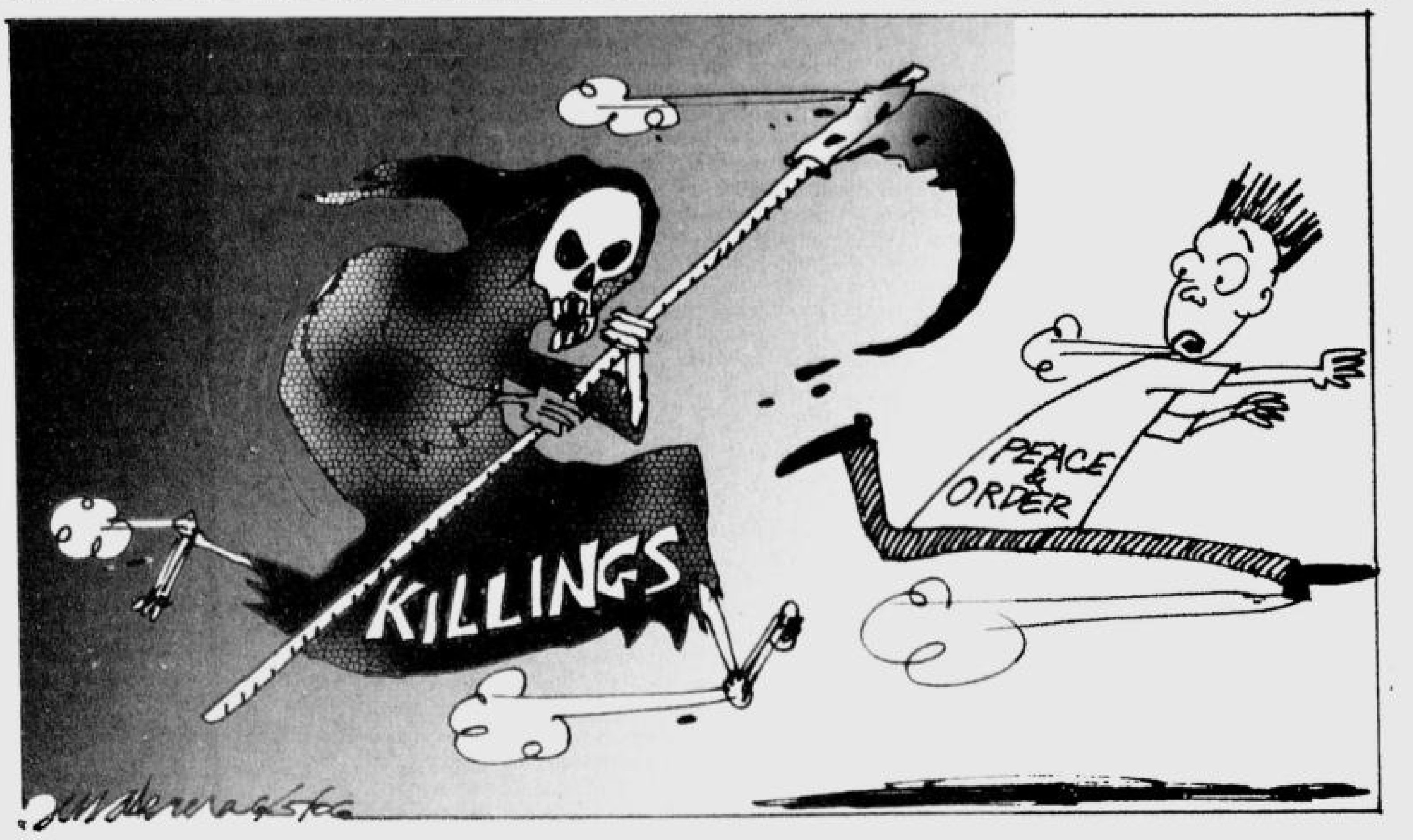

What's on his mind?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

WITH SCHOOLS OPENING TODAY, THE TALK among groups of people is invariably the P50 million donated to educational planholders—left out in the cold by their pre-need company—by former congressman, former convict and now Born-Again Christian Mark Jimenez. With the donation, the jilted planholders can enroll their children for the coming school year or semester. The gist of the discussions is the motive of Jimenez in giving away so much money for nothing. Jimenez himself has said he has no other motive but to help the parents, but people still believe he has something up his sleeve.

The majority opinion is that the former congressman—although he has denied it—plans to go back to politics, and P50 million is a good investment for the purpose of getting votes. People speculate that he plans to reclaim his old seat in the House of Representatives or run for mayor of Manila, now that the position is up for grabs with the popular Lito Atienza finishing his third term next year. If MJ does run for Manila mayor, he will run headlong into two former policemen: Manila's former mayor, Sen. Alfredo Lim; and former PNP chief, Sen. Panfilo Lacson. Plus whoever Atienza himself will anoint as his successor.

Another dark horse (literally and figuratively) looming in the shadows is—believe it or not—Sen. Lito Lapid. The senator from Pampanga was reportedly so shocked by the derisive reaction to his plan to wrest the mayoralty of Makati from the popular Jejomar Binay, that he has set his sights on Manila. Lapid is said to have lost his taste for the Senate because he could not understand and speak English—for which he is derided. Originally, he wanted the mayoralty of Quezon City where he has a house. But Mayor Feliciano Belmonte has one term left and would be a tough nut to crack. So he was persuaded—by you-know-who—to run in Makati whose mayor is a pain in the ass of the Malacañang occupant. Lapid was reportedly promised unlimited campaign funds.

Lapid has nothing to lose and everything to gain by running for mayor in any place where he is qualified to run. Like Senator Lim, if he loses in the election, he can go back to the Senate—with whatever is left of his generous campaign funds.

But going back to Jimenez, he does appear to be a shrewd operator. The name alone of his foundation, the Mahal ka ni Jesus Foundation, with the initials MJ Foundation, is one proof of that.

Well, this is a free country and everybody is free to dream. If MJ dreams of becoming mayor of Manila, let him. If Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who has allegedly committed more heinous crimes than MJ, could run for president, and then could assume the presidency although she lost, why couldn't MJ run for mayor of Manila? And if in doing so he will help thousands of parents left in the lurch by pre-need firms (by the way, what is the Arroyo administration doing to punish abusive and greedy pre-need companies?), so much the better.

Our motto should still be: Don't knock it until you've tried it.

* * *

Since Filipinos seem to be obsessed with landing in the Guinness Book of World Records—making the longest *suman*, the longest *longganisa*, etc., etc.—why don't we try for the world's slowest justice system? I don't think no other country can beat ours in this score. Cases take decades to finish; oftentimes the original litigants are already dead by the time cases, especially those involving lands, are resolved with finality. The case on the housing project inside the La Mesa watershed—which is already 38 years old and still counting as it continues to elude closure—is one of the more recent of those cases. An even more recent case is the one of Banco Filipino against the Central Bank. The case is still awaiting final resolution.

Before the weekend, a two-page advertisement of Banco Filipino appeared in the INQUIRER. The ad contained the most recent decision of the Court of Appeals affirming a lower court's decision declaring the closure of BF by the CB in 1985 as illegal; and ordering the payment of P18.8 billion in damages to BF. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), which replaced the CB, will surely file a motion for reconsideration and, if that is denied, will appeal to the Supreme Court. So the case will take many more years. In the case of the BF owners and their millions of depositors, this delayed justice is truly justice denied.

There is no doubt that the CB erred in closing BF and that the latter should be reimbursed for the horrendous damages it suffered because of the closure. (The Supreme Court ordered BF's reopening in 1991.) The question is: Who would pay for the damages?

The Central Bank Board of Liquidators, (CB-BOL) which inherited the job of liquidating the CB's assets, but which has only a 25-year life span, said "Not us!" The new BSP said "Not us!" The BSP's position is that it has no obligation to settle BF's claim for damages as it is "not the successor-in-interest" of the CB. So BF included the BSP in a supplemental complaint. The Regional Trial Court of Makati agreed with BF. The BSP appealed to the Court of Appeals. The CA affirmed the RTC decision.

The BSP, the CA said, is "indeed the successor-in-interest" of the CB and is bound by the Supreme Court decision declaring the closure of BF illegal and done "with grave abuse of discretion," and that BF is entitled to the payment of damages.

"Over our dead body,'" the members of the Monetary Board are probably thinking. They will surely exhaust all legal means to avoid paying P18.8 billion. The management of BF knows this and, thus, has opened the doors for a negotiated settlement before its owners and depositors die of old age.

On the other hand, the MB members may simply actually choose to allow the case to end only "over their dead bodies."

Responsibility

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

IS GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO RESPONSIBLE for the killings of journalists and activists?

Yes.

Of course, Eduardo Ermita, Ignacio Bunye, Raul Gonzalez and sundry police and military figures bristle at the thought of it, saying on one hand that their favorite boss has no knowledge about and certainly no consent to these killings; on the other, that she is in fact putting her foot down on the killings and would have no more of them. I myself have read and heard suggestions from so-called political analysts that the killings are not her doing, they are the doing of warlords, wayward generals and local officials who know they can get away with it. It may be a clear sign that GMA is no longer in control of her government, but it is also a clear sign that she is not responsible for the killings.

That is a load of bull. The suggestion about GMA getting sick and tired of the killings and has resolved to put an end to it is especially so. Every time a plague reaches pandemic proportions in this country, I hear Bunye say his boss has had enough of it and is resolved to put an end to it. That is so particularly when the international community takes notice of it. I heard Bunye say it variously when the international community took notice of spiraling corruption, deepening poverty and mounting crime in this country. GMA, he said, would have no more of them and would get rid of them.

Well, corruption has gotten worse, poverty has gotten worse and dead journalists and activists have become more plentiful. The only things GMA has managed to get rid of, other than her enemies, are the right of the Senate to summon government officials to hearings, the right of citizens to rally peacefully and the right of the voters to be ruled by someone they voted for. There she truly has put her foot down, refusing to allow her lieutenants to appear before the Senate and refusing to allow rallies at Mendiola notwithstanding that the Supreme Court has scrapped EO 464 and CPR.

Quite apart from this, isn't it completely idiotic to say you will squish the bugs only when they are already overrunning the place? The time for GMA to have put her foot down was when the first journalist or activist was killed, not later.

GMA is responsible for the killings in many ways. Not the least of them is command responsibility. You like to take credit for every good that happens in this country, including Manny Pacquiao winning his fight against Erik Morales because you prayed, you must be prepared to take responsibility for every bad thing that happens in it, including its being hit by all sorts of plagues because you lied. And the killings of journalists and activists are not "ordinary bad," they are an extraordinary evil. You cannot rule over a country and not be responsible for that scale of mayhem. It adds whole new dimensions to the concept of criminal negligence. You're the President and you cannot stop that, you not only deserve to be fired, you deserve to be jailed.

At the very most, you presume to be the President, by hook or by crook, by vote or by Garci, you are responsible for the policy environment that makes things possible or impossible. GMA has produced a policy environment that makes the violation of human rights not just possible but inevitable, and she has produced a policy environment that makes democracy not just untenable but impossible. A policy environment does not just consist of the things you say, it also consists of the things you do. As in teaching, so in governing—example is the best way to communicate.

You can say till you turn blue in the face that you will put your foot down on human rights violations, but you arrest people without warrant and torture them while telling the world you do not have them in your custody, you will have wanton, or worse systematic, human rights violations. You can say till kingdom come that you will put your foot down on the killings, but you pin medals on Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan instead of court-martialing him for suggesting that communists must disappear from the face of this earth, communists being everybody left of center, you are going to have activists massacred en masse. You can say till hell freezes over that you will protect journalists, but you show nothing but contempt for them, intimidating them, harassing them and threatening to arrest them, you encourage their enemies to wreak mayhem on them.

Marcos too never expressly ordered the torture and murder of the political detainees during martial law. You will not find any order, suggestion, or hint, verbal or written, by him along those lines. Yet the Honolulu court, where the victims of torture and the kin of the "salvaged" and disappeared filed a class suit against him, found him guilty of those crimes and ruled that he indemnify the victims. Given the policy environment of martial law, he might as well have etched on tablet an order to that effect. The same is true of GMA.

In the end, what makes GMA responsible for the killings today is the same thing that made Marcos responsible for the killings during martial law. That is, both of them are illegitimate rulers. Marcos stopped being legitimate when he became an unelected leader with martial law. GMA stopped being a legitimate ruler when she became an unelected leader after May 2004. You are an illegitimate leader, you can rule only by force. You rule by force, you can only become a dictator. You become a dictator, you can only unleash the scourges of dictatorship, which are pillage, suppression and murder.

The New York Times editorial is wrong only in that it says GMA is close to mounting a dictatorship. The killings show she already has.

Is GMA responsible for the killings of journalists and activists?

Yes.

Amendment, revision, revolution

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

AT THE RATE CHARTER CHANGE IS BEING PURsued to replace our presidential system with a parliamentary system, I have the feeling that we are going in one of the directions described by Justice Antonio in his separate opinion in the "1973 Ratification Cases." Quoting Melville Weston Fuller, Justice Antonio said: "A written constitution is susceptible of change in two ways: by revolution, which implies action not pursuant to any provision of the constitution itself; and by revision, which implies action pursuant to some procedural provision in the constitution."

What happened in 1973 was not a constitutional revision but a revolution. It will be recalled that President Marcos, by Presidential Decree No. 73, scheduled the plebiscite on the work of the 1972 Constitutional Convention for Jan. 15, 1973. Later, however, by General Order No. 20, he postponed the plebiscite indefinitely. Meanwhile, Marcos organized the Citizens Assemblies which were asked "Do you approve of the New Constitution?" Then suddenly, on Jan. 17, 1973, while the Supreme Court was hearing arguments on the petitions to enjoin the holding of a plebiscite during the charged atmosphere of martial law, Marcos issued Presidential Proclamation 1102 announcing that the new Constitution had been ratified by an overwhelming vote of the members of the Citizens Assemblies.

Many could not and would not believe the news. Some asked the Supreme Court to say that it was not so. But on March 31, 1973, a badly splintered Supreme Court declared "there is no further judicial obstacle to the new Constitution being considered in force and effect."

The Supreme Court did not say that the new Constitution had been validly ratified. But the Supreme Court was confronted by a constitution being implemented by the executive department with all vigor while Congress, having been dissolved, was nowhere to be found. Thus the 1973 Constitution.

Thirteen years later, in February 1986, the 1973 Constitution came to an end the way it began. It was also terminated by a revolution. President Aquino, however, unlike President Marcos in 1973, did not pretend that she was introducing a new constitution following the manner of revision prescribed by the 1973 Constitution. She simply rejected the 1973 Constitution and imposed a Provisional Constitution which called for a Constitutional Commission to draft a new constitution. Thus was born the 1987 Constitution.

President Marcos called the birth of the 1973 Constitution a revolution from within. We called the Provisional Constitution and eventually the 1987 Constitution a product of People Power revolution, a revolution from without.

Comparing the two processes, we can see that the 1973 revolution was initiated by the forces of government, whereas the 1986 revolution was initiated by forces outside the government, which eventually won the support of the Armed Forces.

President Marcos pretended to ground the 1973 process on the 1935 Constitution, claiming ratification by the people, whereas President Aquino openly declared her rejection of the process dictated by the 1973 Constitution while embracing sovereign revolutionary powers.

The action taken by President Marcos received the grudging support of of an isolated Supreme Court which could only exclaim in surrender: "There is no further judicial obstacle to the new Constitution being considered in force and effect." For her part, President Aquino reorganized the Supreme Court whose blessing on the new regime she obtained.

What can we say about the current initiative to change the Constitution? What is it modeled after? After Marcos' revolution from within or after Aquino's people power revolution?

Clearly, the current Cha-cha initiative defies not only the text of the 1987 Constitution but also the 1997 Supreme Court decision proscribing Charter change by initiative and referendum. In that sense, it is a revolution. And like the 1972 revolution from within, it has the appearances of coming from within government and also pays lip service to the Constitution. Moreover, the signature campaign being orchestrated by local governments has all the earmarks of the Citizens Assemblies of 1972. It does not have the spontaneity of the Edsa revolt and neither does it have the honest rejection of the current Constitution which characterized the 1986 revolt. Can the current "initiative revolution" succeed?

Revolutions, whether peaceful or bloody, gain legitimacy only when they win permanent hold of government. With success, they move from being merely *de facto* to being *de jure*. Looking back at the 1972 and 1986 revolutions we must ask, what gave them at least a semblance of "permanent success"?

I see at least two important factors that prop up a revolution. First is the support of the military. President Marcos was clearly supported by the military. But when the military defected in 1986 and threw its support behind President Aquino, the Marcos regime ended and the Aquino presidency began.

The second factor is the position taken by the Supreme Court. In 1972, the Supreme Court was isolated and it settled for being "the least dangerous branch," the usual description given to it. The Court generally remained "non-dangerous" during Marcos' rule. Since 1986, a reorganized Supreme Court has struggled to rebuild its reputation. Recently, it demonstrated it can flex judicial muscles.

All eyes at the moment are fixed on the military and the Supreme Court. They can determine how the current initiative revolution will fare.

The secret identity of Ferdinand Marcos

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

IT WAS IN AUGUST 1976—A FEW WEEKS AFTER we in Mindanao first came to know the word "tsunami," the killer waves that killed an estimated 3,000 (listed and unlisted) coastal residents from Cotabato to Zamboanga, that I had a (my first and only) close encounter of the personal kind, with President Ferdinand Marcos.

I was then with the defunct Department of Public Information, Region 9 (one of the first departments created right after the proclamation of PD 1081). I was one of those assigned to the disaster coordinating team organized by the Presidential Regional Office for Development (PROD-IX) under then regional commander Rear Admiral Romulo Espaldon.

On that bright sunny morning, we were excitedly putting things in order at the PROD for the President's arrival. What added to the excitement was the news that the First Lady Imelda and daughter Imee were accompanying the President.

"Everybody out, *andyan na ang Presidente*" (the President has arrived), I remember hearing an officer. But as my wont, I was the last to leave. So it happened that I froze in my tracks when somebody hysterically whispered that the President was right there on a collision course with me. Of course, I felt close to what Miriam Quiambao must have felt in her famous "fall." I tried to save face by gracefully breaking into a credible smile.

And it happened. "Hello," I heard the familiar baritone, "How are you?"

But before I could reply—all eyes were on us and all I could do was to wish the earth would open up—I heard the voice again, "Ah, so I'm your boss," he said, recognizing my uniform. "How is Jolo?"

That floored me. It was really true—he actually read 201 files! My God, what other deep, dark secrets of mine did he know?

Worse, he drew himself nearer to me and, almost in a whisper, asked, "How is my aunt, the Princess?"

In one of those little miracles that happen to me so frequently, I became convinced that I live what writers call a charmed life, I replied with total comprehension, "I heard she has been ill lately."

"I know," he said. (He seemed to know everything.) "I wish I could see her. By the way, this is off the record, right?"

"Right sir," I affirmed quickly.

And then, just before he turned away, he said, "Should you be in Manila anytime soon, come and see me. Just tell Kit (Information Secretary Francisco Tatad)."

"Yes, sir," I said, trying to imitate his conspiratorial tone.

Then he walked away, and it struck me how he looked magnificent—like a President should—from every angle.

No, I never got to visit him in Malacañang. There was no need. He showed me part of his greatness as a true leader, something that demonstrated what former Sen. John Osmeña wrote me after his visit to Jolo: "A really busy person has time for everything."

Only a few weeks after that meeting with FM, I received a short note on presidential stationery, hand-carried by a military officer: "Your job is very important work, especially for a Tausug working in Mindanao at this time. Observe everything, even the smallest details. Nothing should be ignored. You are safe. Regards," and signed with the most famous signature in the country then.

Even before I opened the unsealed envelope that contained the note, the officer had told me, "*Palaging hawak mo ito kahit saan ka magpunta at dapat walang makakaálam kung di man kailangan. Buti pa kaya lagay mo na lang sa wallet mo.*" (You should keep this with you wherever you go and nobody should know about this unless there is a need to. You better keep this in your wallet.)

In the only time I was forced to show it, the note saved my life, or at least my sanity and myself from almost certain incarceration. Yes, I do owe Marcos. But that is not the reason I am writing about this matter. It is because it is the truth as I know it, and I must reveal it if only for the purpose of setting things right.

In my possession are two brown envelopes of photocopied documents, sent to me by mail on two different dates sometime in 2001. Since receiving them, I have spent much time scrutinizing them. I have interviewed some people who I believed could give me a clue as to their authenticity. I did write a reply to the sender, telling him I would write about the matter in full only after I have validated the documents properly and verified his claim through an interview with him. "Please understand that writing about this will have only two consequences: either I will become famous or I will be the laughingstock of Philippine journalism till the day I die," I wrote him.

Many recent developments have somehow confirmed what I had always suspected since then, and what I have read of the documents, all of which have an important bearing on the so-called ill-gotten wealth.

Ferdinand Marcos was actually Datu Johan (or Juhan), an identity that he mentioned in his letter to his "cousin" (who sent me the documents), the validity of which seems to be confirmed by the type used (a standard Olympia office typewriter), the address (it was sent when Marcos was already in exile in Hawaii) and of course, the signature.

It may strike many people as very curious that Imelda Marcos seems rather clueless about it all. In a recent interview where she was asked where all that wealth came from, she replied almost incoherently that she had no idea, but that she did witness, early in their marriage, Marcos withdrawing a lot of cash from a foreign bank and that she herself was stunned by the amount.

I believed her. *(To be continued)*

* * *

Comments to rubaiyat19@yahoo.com

Suffer the little children

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

ON REGULAR CLASS DAYS, ALONG NUEVE DE Febrero Street, you can see swarms of small children making their way home from school. They skip and laugh, and chase each other and trundle along, heavily laden with book bags. You get to notice immediately how small they are as they weave through the adults bustling about. Then it strikes you how late the night is—for children, anyway. You see, it is the hour that most people consider dinner-time.

Our traditional idea of school time pictures sleepy children going to school in the morning, and coming home in the afternoon—to study and play. That is not the way it is for too many children today. For them, what began as an emergency measure has now become a constant reality. Some go to school during "normal" hours; but there's a second shift of children who attend classes from the afternoon to the evening. Simply because there are very many students but very few classrooms.

It would be good—though probably depressing—to know the kind of life that these children of the second shift live. One wonders how it affects them—their going home when darkness has fallen; walking along streets whose sidewalks have been given up to market stalls and tricycle parking; seeing adults focused on horse-races shown on the *sari-sari* store's TV set and starting their evening drinking. Do they go to bed and sleep at regular hours, and then study the next morning, when the lessons of the previous day have begun to fade from memory? And if they play, as children do, who do they play with? Or do they simply study late into the night, and sleep when most other people are awake during the day?

In the "Analects of Confucius," there is this passage: "When the Master went to Wei, Jan Yu drove his carriage. The Master said: 'What an abundant population!'

'Jan Yu said: 'Now that the people are so abundant, what is the next thing to be done?'

"'Enrich them,' said Confucius.

"'And having enriched them, what then?'

"'Teach them,' was the reply."

In a recent conference in Cebu, the following horrifying data were presented. The average government spending on a Filipino child's education is about $120 per annum, 50 percent of which never reaches the student because it is swallowed up by administrative costs. Contrast this amount with what some of our neighbors spend: $700 for the Thai child; $1,800 for the Malaysian child.

For every 10 Filipino children who enter the first grade, only seven make it to Grade 6; and only five get to enter high school.

The child in school encounters too few teachers, has to live with too few classrooms, and too many classmates. All these things we already know. The stopgap—and now seemingly permanent—solution has been to double the sizes of classes, and "double-shifting." As the President proved last week, this eradicates, at least on paper, the shortage of classrooms in our public school system.

The reality on the ground, as one person told me, is far different: a classroom meant for, say, 75 students is divided into two, each to accommodate 75—meaning, a classroom actually serves 150 kids. What the conditions are like for so many kids and their too few teachers are best left unimagined.

And what of the teachers? In the same conference, we were told that the average age of a public school teacher is 54. Like the ranks of our armed forces, which has 44 as the average age, our public school teachers are graying. From my interaction with public school teachers, I learned that an increasing number of colleagues are transferees from private schools; the salaries of public school teachers have at least become competitive, but that's not saying much. It only suggests that private schools pay too little, and public schools pay marginally better than private schools. But it says nothing about the training they receive, the materials at hand, or the environment in which they must operate. Add to this the observation made by many of the teachers: more and more, they have to assume responsibilities for guidance that normally belong to parents, and one can only guess at the pressure—social, physical, even spiritual—they have to deal with every day.

Of these public school teachers, tests conducted by the Department of Education show, two-thirds have the reading skills of a sixth grader or even lower. More shocking, 11 percent read at preschool levels. This is what we get for spending only one-eighth of the national budget for education.

Thus, while many school teachers may have big hearts, their capacity to teach is, to say the least, limited. But there is hope. Throughout the country, individual schools are breaking out of the cycle of making do without, by reaching out to their communities for assistance. In one public school in Manila, parents come in on weekends before classes open, to paint and patch up classrooms. Wealthier private schools conduct training in ethics and values formation for their colleagues in public schools. The DepEd itself is working on establishing an academy for the professionalization and continuing education of public school principals.

Winston Churchill once said that there's no better investment than putting milk into babies. That kind of investment is not enough. What about other investments, such as putting useful knowledge into the heads of students? Exciting developments are taking place, such as the $100 laptop designed for use by students in developing countries (with a hand-crank to provide power). This would put technology in the hands of young people, and allow countless savings by making it possible to have textbooks in computer files instead of the expensive printed ones. Can the country summon the political will to attend to our crisis in education?

Playing with shortage

COMMENTARY

Juan Miguel Luz

THE OUTBURST OF THE PRESIDENT OVER THE SUPPOSedly "wrong" data on classroom shortage belies a decision-making process that is misguided.

There is a serious shortage of classrooms nationwide, and no amount of economic, mathematical or whatever form of analysis can can make it disappear.

For planning purposes, 45 students per class is the ideal ratio adopted by the Department of Education. Note that the reference unit here is **class**, not **classroom**. A "class" refers to the body of students that learn together. (In Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, the norm is 25-30 per class.) What has happened over the past few years is that our class sizes have ballooned to 65 students on the average; in extreme cases, some classes reach up to 90 students—this is the result of high population growth coupled with the large number of private school students moving to public schools due to rising tuition fees that are now beyond the means of an increasing number of parents.

To deal with overcrowding, the DepEd embarked on an interim strategy (under Secretary Edilberto de Jesus)—"double-shifting" in overcrowded schools so that classrooms could be used **twice** in a day (by two classes—one in the morning and one in the afternoon—rather than by just one class for the entire day). Thus, the "classroom-to-student" ratio became twice the ideal number of students per class.

However, the truth is, a classroom should only be used by one class per day because double- or triple-shifting takes valuable class time away from students. And the shorter the time for learning, the lower the achievement rates in national tests.

Double-shifting is, therefore, just a temporary solution. The real solution should be to build enough classrooms or provide alternative forms of education to deal with a public school enrollment that is growing at around 3 percent per annum at the elementary level and 5-7 percent at the high school level.

This school year (2006-07), the DepEd expects to enroll 12.4 million elementary pupils and 5.5 million secondary students. At single-shift, there is a real shortage of 74,115 classrooms. At double-shift and 50 students per class (the President's preferred strategy), that shortage is 6,832, the figure Secretary Fe Hidalgo reported.

The above-cited figures are based on the DepEd data-base which covers all 41,352 elementary and secondary schools. The numbers represent real shortages. And note that the smaller shortage achieved by double-shifting reflects an inferior learning proposition.

The solutions

There is no single solution to the problem of classroom shortage. The DepEd has proposed a two-pronged strategy: (1) build more classrooms and (2) expand the GASTPE (Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education) contracting scheme.

At current prices, P29 billion is needed to deal with the real shortage (74,115 classrooms at P400,000 per classroom). In a given year, the DepEd has P2 billion for school-building construction. At this rate, it would take close to 15 years to address the shortage, assuming zero-growth in public school enrollment.

Under a double-shift scenario, the DepEd would need P2.7 billion a year to cover the "artificial" shortage of 6,832 classrooms.

On May 5, media reported the release by the Department of Budget and Management of P2 billion for classroom construction "in time for the start of the school year." A release, yes. "In time for the school year"? Hardly. It takes seven months (210 days) to bid, build and turn over a complete classroom (assuming the Department of Public Works and Highways is at its most efficient). Hence, expect classrooms to be delivered in January 2007 at the earliest.

And how is it that classroom construction funds were released in May when the 2006 budget has still to be passed into law? Simple. These are actually classroom construction funds from the 2005 budget. Why it is released so late is the national government's way of managing its fiscal deficit. But why not release the funds in January, during the dry season and six months before the start of the school year, rather than at the onset of the rainy season? This is a question the DepEd has been asking the DBM and Malacañang since 2003, to no avail.

The second strategy is to expand GASTPE. Since the early 1990s, GASTPE has been paying private high schools an annual subsidy so that lower-income families could enroll their children in these schools. For the DepEd, GASTPE is a less expensive alternative to building more classrooms and hiring more teachers (P200,000 for a class of 50 under GASTPE versus P625,000 to build a new classroom for 50 students, hire a new teacher, procure more furniture and books).

In SY 2005-2006, GASTPE paid P4,000 per student for 382,000 students from low-income families to study in 1,700 private high schools nationwide. The students come from families with an annual income of less than P72,000 per year; and the program, which had a total budget of P1.5 billion in 2005, is being managed very efficiently by the Fund for Assistance to Private Education (FAPE). The plan has been to increase the number of grantees by an additional 50,000 students per year until the number settles at 775,000 students per year, enough to arrest the extraordinary growth in our overcrowded public high schools.

In a new twist, however, this administration is turning the program into a "voucher" system and, in all likelihood, the distribution of the vouchers will be given to the LGUs (rather than to the education sector). With the school year opening this week, FAPE has yet to receive any word if there will be the additional slots for poor students so they can transfer them to near-empty private schools. As is now usual, the program is being hijacked for political rather than educational ends.

Misguided process

The shortages in our education system are real. Yet the President's outburst is forcing the DepEd to "rethink" its figures. I have no doubt the DepEd will have different figures tomorrow—figures that should make the President happy.

That, of course, is the problem in our form of governance. We don't face reality squarely (look at the claims in the last Sona as analyzed by a leading economist); we distort it (look at Neda's use of the population growth projections); and we don't address it responsibly (look at this current classroom shortage issue). When reality is not to their liking, this government creates new definitions and "facts and figures."

Thus, the decision-making process becomes misguided and misleading. Worse, the bureaucracy is cowed into playing the game at its peril.

Juan Miguel Luz is a former undersecretary of the Department of Education.

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Lovable Secretary Gonzalez

LETTERS

ISN'T JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL Gonzalez simply lovable? Without him, the Arroyo administration would be bland, less exciting.

Imagine him telling the Batasan 5 to go back to the mountains "where they belong." I almost died laughing. He was inciting them to rebellion, but who is going to indict him? Presidential Chief of Staff Mike Defensor?

Levity aside, whenever Gonzalez is interviewed in his office, the clutter on his desk can't be missed. How can I trust the efficiency of a government functionary whose work backlog almost keeps him out of sight? If his signing hand is as fast as his mouth, we should surely be enjoying the sight of a more pleasing desk whenever he appears on television.

Gonzalez is undoubtedly a witch-hunter belonging to the Cold War era of the '50s and the '60s. He sees communists, rebels and "destabilizers" even in his sleep.

None of the five, not even Satur Ocampo, really belongs to the mountains. Ka Satur's stint as NDF spokesperson never confined him in the jungle.

The battle in Metro Manila and other urban areas is for the hearts and minds of the people, but the people's war cannot be won in the cities. The war in the urban areas is political, where the better ideas and better organizations prevail. Gonzalez should learn to accept fresh ideas and organize his desk first before he opens his mouth again. Otherwise, he will only lose in the propaganda war.

—ARCHIMEDES S. MARQUEZ,
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Navotas, Metro Manila

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UP College of Medicine shows CHED's incompetence

WHILE THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER Education has been asking private universities to freeze tuition fee hikes and impose additional fees ("Don't impose new fees, CHED warns private schools," PDI, 5/23/06), it has miserably failed to prevent the country's premier state university, the University of the Philippines, particularly its College of Medicine, from increasing its fees. Starting this school year, pursuant to a decision of the UP Board of Regents (BOR), which is chaired by CHED, it is going to charge incoming freshmen a tuition fee of around P20,000 per semester. This is P8,000 higher than the tuition fee the college charged in previous years.

CHED's failure to effectively impose its own order on UP reveals its incompetence to act as a national regulating body for higher education institutions. The CHED has no basis for exempting UP from its freeze order, especially when the basis for the order is the economic crisis affecting every Filipino family, including the parents of our Iskolars ng Bayan.

Among the state universities and colleges (SUCs), it is UP that receives the biggest budget from the national government. This is reason enough for the CHED to regulate UP's fee increases. Moreover, both CHED and UP were given an additional budget of P100 million each for 2006 by the Senate. ("Senate set to enact 'responsible, prudent' budget—Villar," PDI, 5/26/06)

The tuition fee hike imposed by the UP College of Medicine will affect 160 students and, therefore, will generate at most P1.3 million, an amount that can be sufficiently covered by the budget increase.

CHED should not allow this tuition fee increase in UP this coming academic year. It should review instead the socialized tuition fee program of UP and all SUCs.

Also regrettable in the recent BOR meeting was the absence of the chair of the Senate Committee on Higher Education, Sen. Juan Flavier, himself a graduate of the UP College of Medicine. He failed to fight for the dreams of bright and underprivileged students who are aspiring to become doctors. His absence was a disservice to the country, which is already suffering from medical brain drain.

Iskolars ng Bayan fear that with the approved tuition fee increase in the College of Medicine, other colleges and units would follow suit. It does feel like we are scaling a steep mountain of rising fees (editorial cartoon, PDI, 5/30/06), with only the financially able reaching the top.

—CHRISTINE ANN DE VILLA,
tin2devz@yahoo.com

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Philippines will always have enough nurses

IN REFERENCE TO THE INQUIRER EDITORIAL "Goodbye, dear nurses" (PDI, 5/29/06), I strongly disagree that hospitals in our country will run out of trained nurses in the future. The fact is, thousands of Filipinos finish nursing courses every year, to the point that hospitals—especially in the provinces where these are few and far between—can no longer accommodate many of them.

The solution to the problem is not to limit the export of nurses but to change the policies of hospitals regarding employment. There is such a thing as a "contract" signed between employee and employer. The agreement should be favorable to hospitals in terms of giving them time to train new nurses before those in their employ complete their contract. Many hospitals are just too lazy to hire and train new nurses. That is why they experience shortage of nurses. But there are many out there who are trained to serve as nurses but are out of job! And definitely many more of them are graduating in the coming years. Please check this out with the various schools of nursing all over the country.

Many parents are encouraging their sons and daughters to take up nursing. Why? Because it's the surest way to work abroad. Why abroad? Because there are no good job prospects in the Philippines; it's also the only decent way to get out of a difficult life in a country always in a political and economic crisis; in a country where the unemployment rate is continually rising.

I wonder why some people are against nurses going abroad to work. They should instead help the government address the more important problems facing our nation. They should know that nurses, especially those in the provinces, are not well compensated. The present pay of a nurse can't support a family nowadays. Unfortunately, most hospital owners in the Philippines are insensitive to the nurses' plight. So, the only way for a nurse to get out of the difficult situation is to go and earn money abroad. Hospitals abroad are more generous and they are good employers.

Filipinos will suffer more if skilled workers like nurses are banned from working abroad. Besides, we are a democratic country. Each and every one of us has the right to a better life. People should know that nurses who work abroad help not only their parents, sisters, brothers and relatives but also the Philippine economy in a big way. They are heroes. We should be proud of them.

Or would we rather want our country to be identified with domestic helpers and prostitutes? The fact is, Filipino nurses working abroad not only help our economy but also promote a better image of our country.

—JOSEPHINE U. CORTEZ,
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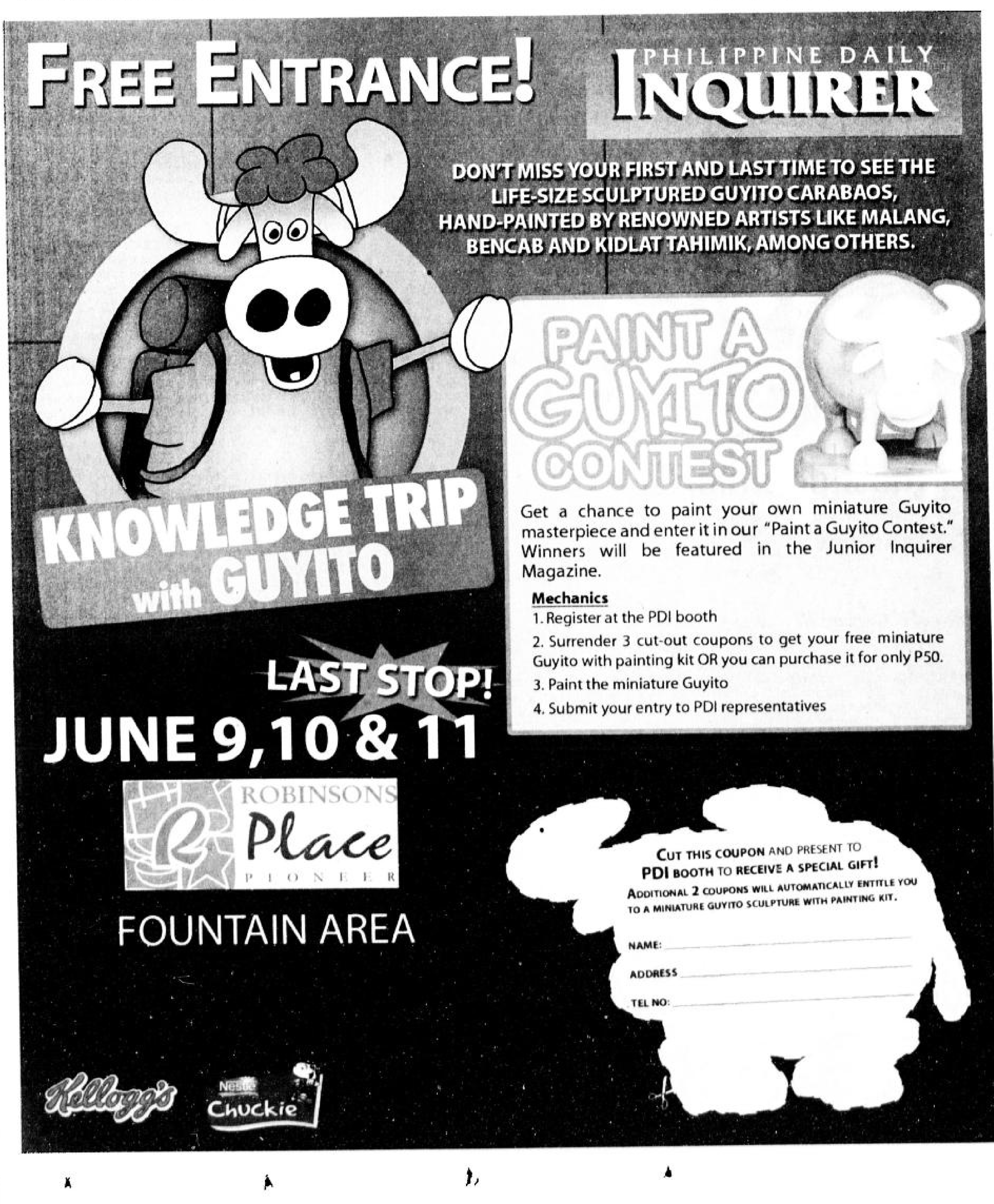
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Our past shows English is an effective medium

IN THE INQUIRER ISSUE OF APRIL 21, RAUL Pangalangan wrote "English is cool, Pinoy English is 'kulang.'"

I would like to take exception to paragraph 7: "Today, we acknowledge that teaching the basic subjects to primary school children in a foreign language makes no sense. The child has enough problems with Math, and then we compound his problems by teaching it in a language he doesn't understand. The young ones today learn many of their subjects in Filipino, and that is only wise."

Pangalangan also mentioned that he struggled with the entrance test in the first grade at the Lourdes School in Mandaluyong, because he didn't speak a word of English, having been brought up in a purely Tagalog-speaking home.

In my case, I enrolled in Grade I in Ilagan, Isabela in June 1931 (not 1930 as I inadvertently wrote Pangalangan). Like him, I could not speak a word of English. The dialects in our neighborhood were Ibanag and Ilocano. At home, we conversed in Kapampangan because both my parents were Pampangueños. I talked with my friends in Ibanag and Ilocano. All the subjects, starting with the first grade, were conducted in English.

Since the establishment of the educational system by the Americans in the early 1900s, English was the sole medium of instruction in all schools. Modesty aside, we did not encounter any insurmountable problem in learning any subject, including Math, just because English was the medium of instruction. I, therefore, cannot understand why it is nonsensical to teach the basic subjects to primary school children in a foreign language.

Our textbooks, up to the mid-1930s, were far superior to those that were repeatedly revised and rewritten later. Our teachers were very good because they were products of the same system, and teacher education then was at its prime. The hours that they spent in school were devoted solely to teaching and not "diluted" by private business or chatting among themselves. The school administrators were educators in the true sense of the word and had a healthy respect for public funds. We spent no less than six hours in school and frequented the library which was well-stocked with quality reading materials.

I fully understand and appreciate the need to schedule classes in shifts because of the shortage of classrooms and teachers. This problem can be mitigated, to some extent, by radically rewriting our textbooks, retraining teachers, allotting more funds for education, as repeatedly avowed by government authorities and leading educators.

If we all agree that English should be the sole medium of instruction in our schools—let us do it without any qualms. It has been done before—in my generation and in the generations ahead of us. Young Filipino students can learn all their subjects in English—this has been shown in the past.

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71 more arrest warrants for 18 farmers

LUCENA CITY—EIGHTEEN FARMERS IN THE BONDOC Peninsula in Quezon province are facing 71 more warrants from big landlords, according to the Philippine Ecumenical Action for Community Empowerment (Peace) Foundation, a nongovernment organization supporting the farmers.

Joanne Fernandez, Peace spokesperson, said the warrants of arrest were issued on Friday.

"And we were informed that more arrest warrants against the farmers would be issued the following days. This coming week, a second batch of farmers would again surrender themselves before authorities in Manila," Fernandez said in an interview here.

She said they had also received information that one of their community organizers was also arrested by the police.

"We're still getting all the details surrounding the arrest for the corresponding legal action. We strongly condemn the arrest," Fernandez said.

Fernandez lamented the staggering amount needed to secure the temporary liberty of the farmers. She said there were 279 cases filed against 173 farmers.

She bewailed the fact that even if they were able to post bail for some of the arrested farmers, "they still could not be freed in the absence of the municipal judge."

"We learned that the municipal judge in San Francisco is on official leave for two months," Fernandez said.

She maintained that considering the cost to the farmers, landowners and the government, "it would be folly to play the landowners' game and engage them in all cases they filed in the legal arena."

"For the 37 farmers with standing warrants of arrest, the total bail fixed by the courts amounts to P1.9 million," she said.

She added that one could only speculate on the amount of the bail needed.

"These do not take into account yet the cost of the services of lawyers and paralegals and other incidental expenses," the Peace official said.

Fernandez pointed out that further injustice would be committed to the farmers if they would be sent to court at all.

"They should have been haled before an agrarian court and not to a criminal court," she argued.

She asked the Department of Justice to direct the provincial prosecutor of Quezon to prepare an inventory of cases filed against farmers of San Andres, San Francisco and San Narciso towns.

Fernandez also asked the DOJ to form a panel to review all such cases now pending before the provincial prosecutor and order the dismissal of those that are clearly agrarian in nature.

"It should also review the cases already filed with the RTCs (Regional Trial Courts) and move for the dismissal of those that are agrarian in character," she added.

To avoid a repetition, the DOJ should formulate guidelines on how prosecutors should treat cases with agrarian underpinnings, Fernandez said.

On Wednesday, some 100 farmers belonging to the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Bondoc Peninsula, accompanied by their families, voluntarily surrendered to the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) office in Camp Crame.

The farmers face 187 criminal cases ranging from qualified theft to estafa to trespassing filed against them by landowners.

Thirty-seven of the farmers had their arrest warrants with them, leaving the CIDG with no choice but to take them into custody.

The 37 are now detained in Gumaca and San Francisco municipal jails in Quezon. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

20 hurt in wayward truck

COTABATO CITY—At least 20 people were injured when the truck they were riding in turned turtle in North Upi, Maguindanao on Thursday. Mayor Ramon Piang of North Upi said most of the victims suffered minor injuries, except for Jomar Ilin, who lost his left leg. Piang said the victims were on their way home to Datu Odin Sinsuat town when the incident occurred. *Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Village guard die in attack

COTABATO CITY—A village guard died when armed men attacked Barangay Mudsing in Midsayap, North Cotabato on Wednesday, according to Midsayap police chief Supt. Chino Mamburam on Saturday. Dozens of families moved out of their homes were forced to move out when the gunmen stormed their village at around 1 p.m. Mamburam said farmers were busy in their farmlands. "The group behind this incident was the same group responsible for attacks on Barangays Rangaban and Baliki earlier this month," Mamburam said. *Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Fire destroys 13 houses

DAVAO CITY—Fire of still unknown origin gutted at least 13 houses in Bangkal village here on Wednesday evening. The incident occurred in the wake of calls from the city's authorities for residents to be extra vigilant against fire. SFO1 Virgilio Lariego, fire investigator of the Talomo fire brigade, said no one was injured in the incident that started about 6:20 p.m. The fire was put off after about an hour. *Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Soldier slain in ambush

PAGADIAN CITY—Communist rebels on Friday ambushed and killed a soldier, who was on his way to work in Lakewood, Zamboanga del Sur, the military said on Saturday. Zamboanga del Sur police chief Senior Supt. Ramon Ochotorena said Pfc Allan Rogador of the Army's 53rd Infantry Battalion was driving a motorcycle in Barangay Lokuan when waylaid by about eight New People's Army rebels at about 9 a.m. He died on the spot.

Ochotorena said the rebels fled after the incident, bring with them the slain soldier's M-16 Armalite rifle. Michael Sarcauga, PDI Mindanao Bureau

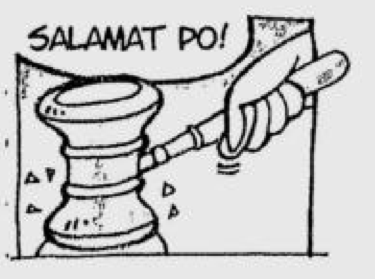
Doc, wife rescued

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Police rescued a doctor and his wife who were kidnapped in Bulacan after a gunfight with the abductors in Magalang, Pampanga, on Monday night. Central Luzon police director Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan said the victims, Dr. Gervacio Santos and his wife, Sylvia Fe, were not hurt in the 11 p.m. clash near the suspects' safe house in Barangay San Miguel, some 30 km northeast of this camp. A suspect was killed in the gunfight. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon*

Spoiled food kills 3

CABANATUAN CITY—A couple and their eldest child died while three other family members survived after they ate native sausages and vegetables that were believed spoiled. Reports said Fernando and Janet Juan died on Friday afternoon while their son, Christian, 14, died on Saturday morning at the Paulino J. Garcia Memorial Hospital here. Doctors, however, declared the couple's other children, Sarah, 12, Jasper, 5, and Camille, 4, as out of danger on Sunday. *Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Pinay maid family thankful



TAGUDIN, Ilocos Sur—The family of Filipino maid Guen Aguilar was relieved that she escaped the death penalty for killing a fellow Filipino in Singapore last year. Aguilar, who was charged with culpable homicide for the killing of Jane Lapuebla, was sentenced to 10 years in prison by a Singaporean court this week. Edwin Aguilar, Guen's husband, said they were happy that the court did not impose the death penalty. *Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

No foul play in recruit's death

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Police officials ruled out foul play in the death of a police recruit here on Tuesday. Brian Bagadiong, 22, died from a heart attack, Central Luzon police director Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan said, citing a medical report. Bagadiong, who was attending a police orientation course, was jogging at the regional camp's oval when he collapsed. He died while being taken to the V.L. Makabali Hospital in nearby City of San Fernando *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Militiamen clash with MILF rebels; personal feud eyed

TACURONG CITY—GOVERNMENT MILITIAMEN attacked members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in an outskirt village in Sultan Sa Barongis in Maguindanao yesterday noon.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said the militiamen, who are former members of the Moro National Liberation Front, fired on the MILF members under Commander Ali.

"This was brought about by a long-standing feud between [MNLF] Commander Jakukiya and Ali. We will investigate this so that we can act appropriately," Kabalu said.

But Kabalu could still not say if there were casualties in the clash.

The incident happened while members of the government and the MILF peace panels were holding low-level talks in Zamboanga City.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Col. Franklin del Prado, spokesperson of the Army's Sixth Infantry Division.

Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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Geothermal exploration continues in S. Leyte

By Vicente S. Labro
PDI Visayas Bureau

LILOAN, SOUTHERN LEYTE—THE GOVERNMENT is set to continue the geothermal fields exploration in Southern Leyte this year, which can be the answer to the growing need for power of the Visayas grid.

The geothermal exploration activity could provide job opportunities to the poor people of Southern Leyte, which in recent years had been hit by a series of disasters that displaced hundreds of families and claimed the lives of over 1,000 persons.

"I have no doubt that we will continue to develop the geothermal potential in Southern Leyte," said Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla who was here with other energy officials on Friday to attend to the launching of a housing project for landslide victims from two of Liloan's villages. The housing project was sponsored mainly by the energy sector.

A GEOTHERMAL facility of the Philippine National Oil Corp. in Kidapawan City, North Cotabato. DENNIS JAY SANTOS/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Growth of demand

Lotilla said the growth of demand for power in the Visayas could provide a market for a geothermal plant in Southern Leyte.

He said the market was not Leyte itself but Cebu and the rest of the Visayas.

"It need not be the interconnection with Mindanao immediately. Eventually down the road, several years from now, that might become possible. But right now, just connecting it to the Cebu interconnection, to the rest of the Visayas, [would do] because it is where the demand is," Lotilla said.

"Cabalian's development will continue because you can connect that to Ormoc [City] northward rather than to Mindanao. We don't have to spend as much and Transco (National Transmission Corp.) is working on that as well," he told the INQUIRER, referring to Mt. Cabalian in San Juan town, the site of the geothermal exploration.

Paul Aquino, president and chief executive officer of the Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC), said the Cabalian geothermal exploration project was set in the fourth quarter of this year.

"We'll bring all our rigs here [in Southern Leyte] for mobilization. Mobilization is in the fourth quarter," he told the INQUIRER.

During the project implementation, he said, "we'll take one hole and we'll 'acidize' another hole, and we'll make more work-over on a previous hole."

Acidizing, he explained, is the cleaning of a hole. Once done, this will "give us a clear indication of how much is the power that's available (in the area)."

Aquino said the exploration would cost them around P140 million including the work-over.

He added it would take them at least three months "to do all the geological studies" and by then, they could give an assurance as to how much megawatts were available in the geothermal area.

"So from there, the decision would be *tuloy, hindi tuloy* (whether the project would go on or not)," he said.

The PNOC-EDC has shown interest in developing the Cabalian geothermal fields in the 1990s yet, but this was not pursued.

Big landslide

Aquino said that because of the big landslide that hit Southern Leyte last February, "the government has asked us to make it a priority project, at least for the exploration site so that there would be economic activity in the area."

Southern Leyte Gov. Rosette Lerias said she asked Lotilla to help them in asking President Macapagal-Arroyo to fast track the project's implementation.

She said the project would not only generate jobs for the people of Southern Leyte "but in the long term, it would be able to improve the economic conditions of the province and the people."

In the meantime, Transco president and chief executive officer Alan Ortiz said his office was pushing the implementation of the Leyte-Mindanao interconnection project.

"We want to connect the whole network of transmission lines all over the country and the closest connection to Mindanao is through Southern Leyte, in particular Cabalian, because it still has a potential of 120 megawatts of geothermal power," he said.

If Leyte was connected to Mindanao, he said, there would be a unified grid and the power coming from Cabalian could be sold anywhere in the country, not only in Mindanao.

Justice
for
Dong Batul

HUNDREDS of Palawan folk accompanied broadcaster Fernando "Dong" Batul to his burial ground and demanded for justice for his killing. JOFELLE TESORIO/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Palawan radioman buried

By Jofelle Tesorio
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Joined by a crippled man and a 65-year-old woman walking through the 8-km distance from the Immaculate Conception Cathedral to the Puerto Princesa Memorial Park, grieving relatives, friends and supporters of Fernando "Dong" Batul brought the broadcaster to rest at about 1:30 p.m. on Saturday.

Most of them wore white t-shirts with Batul's picture and the words "Justice for Dong" in front.

At the back was another slogan, "*Ang mali ay nilalabanan, ang tama ay ipinaglalaban.*" Fernando "Dong" Batul, *pinaslang: Mayo* 22, 2006.

The 2-km long funeral march started at about 10 a.m., after the 7:45 a.m. concelebrated Mass led by Bishop Pedro Arigo of the Apostolic Vicariate of Palawan and necrological services led by Palawan Governor Joel Reyes.

Arigo, who was a close friend of the slain broadcaster, had been celebrating Mass every evening for Batul.

Considered the biggest funeral march in the history of Palawan, longer than that of former House Speaker Ramon Mitra Jr., residents from all walks of life did not mind the heat of the sun and hunger just to see their "broadcaster-hero" laid to his final resting place.

"I decided to walk eight kilometers because it is only once that I could join the funeral march of a hero," said Lolo Ben, 63, of Barangay Mandaragat here.

Daisy Sigaram, 65, of Roxas, Palawan said, "I did not mind my hunger just to accompany Dong to his last moment."

Sigaram left her house at the mountain at about 3 a.m. to be at Batul's funeral.

She said she only had her flashlight with her when she came down to catch up with the bus going to Puerto Princesa, which took her two hours.

Friends and supporters carried streamers and placards that called for justice to their slain hero.

The multicab vehicle that he was driving when he was ambushed was pulled by a white Galant at the front of the funeral march.

Unidentified gunmen killed Batul while on his way to work at dyPR station, about 100 meters where the crime happened, on May 22.

A suspect, PO1 Aaron Golifardo, has been arrested and a murder case has been filed against him.

The funeral march passed by Manalo St. where Batul was shot dead and where young journalists paid tribute to him.

They said Batul's death would not be in vain. And even with his death, they said, somebody from their ranks would surely surface to continue the broadcaster's fight.

The funeral march also passed by the dyPR station before Batul was finally brought to rest at the Puerto Princesa City Memorial Park in Barangay San Jose.

At the memorial park, people were still coming even after Batul had already been laid to rest.

Flowers surrounded his grave while a large tarpaulin bearing his picture with a Philippine flag at the back was hoisted above it.

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2. LADISLAO G. ROBLES	III-E2	41D	21	2D	21
3. BENJAMIN V. TANGKEKO	III-E2	46A	27	7A	27
4. LAURO DELOS SANTOS	III-E2	46B	2	16	2
5. CONSORCIA BATERZAL	III-E2	46B	13	16/7B	7/10
6. WILFREDO B. VILLABRILLE	III-E2	46B	14	16/7B	8/11
7. LEOPOLDO J. JOVERES	III-E2	46C	12	17/7C	2/12
8. BUENAVENTURA A. AGANA	III-E2	46D	16	18/7D	6/15
9. FERNANDO M. OPLE	III-E2	46D	17	18/7D	5/16
10. FELIXBERTO T. CASTILLO JR.	III-E2	46E	6	19	6
11. ERNESTO M. GAZA	III-E2	46E	10	19	10
12. ARSENIA T. MAGHANOY	III-E2	46E	12	19	12
13. ROMEO C. PARADO	III-E2	46E	16	19	16
14. DOMINADOR P. MARIÑAS	III-E2	46G	12	21/7E	12/2
15. BONIFACIO M. ANDRINO	III-E2	46G	16	21	16
16. DOMINGO B. SATUR	III-E2	46G	18	21	18
17. DOMINGO B. MAGBITANG	III-E2	49J	11	28	11
18. BONIFACIO C. AQUINO	III-E2	49K	4	29	4
19. ARCELI R. GARCIA	III-E2	49K	17	29	17
20. ISAGANI R. DE QUINA	III-E2	49K	22	29	22

(Sgd.) FEDERICO A. LAXA
General Manager

(PDI – May 29 & June 5, 2006)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation
Republic of the Philippines

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF VARIOUS CABLES
PB060428-LE0073/PR NO. PM-EDC-06-000020433

1. The NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, Head Office Region (TRANSCO-HO) through the 2006 Corporate Budget approved by the TransCo Board intends to apply the sum of ***PhP 10,710,979.20*** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for ***PB060428-LE0073/PR NO. PM-EDC-06-000020433, Supply and Delivery of Various Cables.*** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening. Award shall be on a lot basis
2. The *TRANSCO-HO* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for ***Supply and Delivery of Various Cables.*** Delivery of the GOODS is required ***within sixty (60) calendar days from the receipt of the approved Purchase Order/Contract.*** The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine resposiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below from ***May 29, 2006 to June 20, 2006*** from ***9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.*** and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of ***Php 2,000.00.*** The method of payment will be ***Cash.*** The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
5. The TRANSCO-HO will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **June 07, 2006 /3:30 P.M.** at the address below.
6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before ***June 21, 2006/10:00 A.M.*** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following forms and amount or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Form of Security	Minimum Amount In % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%) or P107,109.79
2. Bank guarantee	One and a half percent (1-1/2%) or P160,664.68
3. Surety bond	Two and a half percent (2-1/2%) or P267,774.48
4. Foreign government guarantee	One hundred percent (100%) or P10,710,979 20

7. Bid opening shall be on ***June 21, 2006/10:00 AM*** at the *Admin Conference Room same address below.* Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
8. The ***National Transmission Corporation*** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region
Mr Armando N Ochoa, BAC Chairman
MMD Office, G/F TransCo Main Bldg.
Power Center, Quezon Ave. corner BIR Road
Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. (632) 9812205/(632) 9812241
Fax No. (632) 9228432
Website: www.transco.ph

(Sgd.) ARMANDO N. OCHOA
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – May 29 & June 5, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
10th Flr., A. Francisco Gold Condominium II, EDSA corner Mapagmahal Street, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

June 5, 2006

1. The Government of the Philippines (GOP), through the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), has received an ODA Loan from Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) in the amount of FOUR HUNDRED EIGHTY FIVE AND FIFTY TWO MILLION JAPANESE YEN (¥485 52 million) toward the cost of the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project, Phase V (RWSSP V), Loan Agreement No. PH-P201, dated December 28, 1999, and intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of the loan to payments under the contract for which this Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid is issued. Disbursement of the ODA Loan by JBIC will be subject, in all respects, to the terms and conditions of the Loan Agreement, including the disbursement procedures and the "Guidelines for Procurement under JBIC ODA Loans". No party, other than the GOP, shall derive any right from the Loan Agreement or have any claim to loan proceeds. The above Loan Agreement will cover only a part of the project cost. As to the remaining portion, the GOP and the concerned Provincial Local Government Unit (LGU) will take appropriate measures for finance.
2. JBIC requires that the bidders and contractors, as well as the GOP and the Provincial LGU, under contracts funded with JBIC ODA Loans and other Japanese ODA, observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and execution of such contracts. In pursuance of this policy, JBIC:
   (a) will reject a proposal for award if it determines that the bidder recommended for award has engaged in corrupt and fraudulent practices in competing for the contract in question;
   (b) will recognize a contractor as ineligible, for a period determined by JBIC, to be awarded a contract funded with JBIC ODA Loans if at any given time, it is determined that the contractor has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for, or in executing, another contract funded with JBIC ODA Loans or other Japanese ODA.
3. The Provincial LGU of the Province of Ilocos Sur, hereinafter the "Employer", invites all interested Contractors, including voluntarily formed joint ventures, from all countries and areas to submit Expression of Interest for Eligibility Processing. Local Contractors shall be holders of Philippine Contractor's Accreditation Board (PCAB) License and Certificate of Registration and Classification of Contractors as Medium B for Water Supply. Foreign Contractors must be licensed and certified by their Embassy/Consulate in the country as a bonafide Contractor. If found Eligible, the Contractor must bid for the following

   Drilling/Construction of water supply projects, consisting of 24 units deep well, 7 units shallow well, and installation of iron removal facilities as applicable; and 8 units of school toilet and 1 unit of public toilet; all as one contract package.

   Contract duration is 210 calendar days.
4. Further information and the form for Expression of Interest for Eligibility Processing can be acquired, for free, from the Office of the Provincial Governor, Province of Ilocos Sur, Attention: the Chairman of BAC, Provincial Capitol, Vigan City, upon presentation of a written request from June 5, 2006 to June 27, 2006
5. The deadline for submission of Expression of Interest for Eligibility Processing shall not be later than 5:00 P.M., June 27, 2006, the same to be submitted either by registered mail, courier or hand -carried, in a sealed envelope duly labeled "Expression of Interest for Eligibility Processing RWWSP V", to the Provincial Governor, Province of Ilocos Sur, Attention: the Chairman, BAC, Provincial Capitol, Vigan City.
6. It is expected that the Provincial LGU, the Employer, will issue only to Eligible Applicants the Certificate of Eligibility on or about July 12, 2006, wherein the schedule of issuance of Bid Documents and submission and opening of bids will be announced. Bid Documents will only be issued to Eligible Applicant upon presentation of the original copy of the Certificate of Eligibility and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P2,500.00
7. An applicant, and if found Eligible, a bidder (including all members of a joint venture) shall not be one of the following:
   (a) A firm or an organization which has been engaged by the DILG/Employer to provide consulting/NGO services for the preparation related to procurement for or implementation of this project;
   (b) Any association/affiliation (inclusive of parent firm) of a firm or an organization mentioned in subparagraph (a) above; or
   (c) A firm or organization who lend, or temporarily second their personnel to firms or organizations which are engaged in consulting/NGO services for the preparation related to procurement for or implementation of the project, if the personnel would be involved in any capacity on the same project.
8. The Eligibility of the Applicants will be evaluated based on the submission of Legal documents, Technical requirements and Financial documents using non-discretionary criteria of "PASS" or "FAIL".
9. A minimum requirement for qualification is to have successfully carried out similar projects at least for within the past five (5) years.
10. The Employer shall under no circumstances be held responsible for late delivery or loss of the documents so mailed or sent through courier.
11. The Employer reserves the right to:
    (a) amend the scope and value of any contract to be bid, in which event the contract will only be bid among those bidders who meet the requirements of the contract as amended;
    (b) reject or accept any application;
    (c) cancel the Eligibility Processing and reject all Expression of Interest; and
    (d) waive any formality in the Eligibility Processing to ensure that the objectives of the Eligibility Processing are met.

    The Employer shall neither be liable for any such actions nor be under any obligation to inform the Applicant of the grounds for them.

(Sgd.) **AUSTERE A. PANADERO**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI June 5 & 12, 2006)

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC.
San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga
Tel Nos. (045) 900-2650/900-0689 Fax No. (045) 901-0534 Email: pelco_2@yahoo.com

June 2, 2006

INVITATION TO BID

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (PELCO II) WITH OFFICE ADDRESS AT SAN ROQUE, GUAGUA, PAMPANGA IS INVITING INTERESTED BIDDERS FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERIES ON THE FOLLOWING PACKAGES;

Package 1:
Kilowatt Hour Meter with Meter Base Round 7,000 pieces
Brand: G.E. I-70-S (Brand New)
2 wire, cl. 100, 240v, Rr27 7/9, TA 15, Kh 3.6

Package 2:
25 MVA Power Transformer 1 unit
Manufacturer: USA, Europe, Korea and Japan
Rated Power - 25,000 kva
Frequency - 60hz
High Voltage - 69kv
Low Voltage - 13,200/7620Y
Hv Tap Changer On load or Off Load
Type of Construction:
Tank with bolted cover, breathing with conservator
Bucholz Relay with two (2) floats provided with contacts for alarm trip.
Note: Package 2 includes supply, delivery, installation, testing and commissioning

Package 3:
Pervasive SQL V9 (250 users) 1 unit
Magic Runtime (150 licenses) 1 unit
1GB PC2100 CL2.5 ECC DDR SDRAM RDIMM 2 sets
(Additional Memory Server)

You are therefore invited to submit your bids/proposals to the PBAC and participate in a sealed bidding on June 20, 2006 (Tuesday), 10:00 A.M. at PELCO II Board Room San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga wherein your bid will be opened in your presence or that of your representatives. Late submission and/or incomplete bid documents shall not be accepted

REQUEST FURTHER TO INCLUDE IN YOUR SEALED BIDS/PROPOSALS ASIDE FROM **THE BID AMOUNT, THE TERMS OF PAYMENT AND AVAILABILITY OF STOCKS,** THE BID BOND IS EITHER IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TWO AND ONE HALF PERCENT (2.5%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE OR SURETY BOND (W/O R.) EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE. ALL BIDDERS ARE REQUESTED TO BE A PELCO II BOARD ROOM AT EXACTLY 10:00 A.M. TO SECURE BID DOCUMENTS AND FURTHER CLARIFICATION. PLEASE CONTACT OR VISIT PBAC CHAIRMAN ENGR. RAUL J. CANLAS, TEL. NO. (045) 900-2650 OR ENGR. AGOSTO L. OCAMPO AT (045) 901-0864-65.

LATE SUBMISSION OF BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. THE PBAC HAS THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS, WAIVE ANY INFORMALITY IN THE PROPOSAL RECEIVED AND TO ACCEPT SUCH MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE COOPERATIVE

(Sgd.) Engr. **RAUL L. CANLAS**
PBAC, Chairperson

Noted by:

(Sgd.) **SULPICIO C. LAGARDE**
General Manager

(PDI - June 4 & 5 2006)

108TH INDEPENDENCE DAY

Lack of support frustrates foundation

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

ANGELES CITY—OFFICIALS OF A foundation organizing commemoration rites for the first and last anniversary of Independence Day here held by the short-lived first Philippine Republic said they were frustrated by the national government's lack of recognition of the event.

Despite invitations, no representatives from the executive, legislative or judicial departments had graced the reenactment of the June 12, 1899 episode at the Pamintuan mansion here since its centennial, according to Jose Paras Jr., Kuliat Foundation Inc. vice president and museum curator.

Paras said the events had remained local occasions although the National Historical Institute installed a marker at the mansion in 2004.

The NHI recognized the mansion as the general headquarters of Filipino revolutionary forces led by Gen. Antonio Luna and the seat of the First Republic and a presidential palace.

It was President Emilio Aguinaldo who led the celebration of the first anniversary of the declaration of independence in Kawit, Cavite, on June 12, 1898. Generals Gregorio del Pilar of Bulacan and Manuel Tinio of Nueva Ecija led the Army parade.

From one of the windows of the stately European-style Pamintuan residence, Aguinaldo was said to have waved the original flag sewn in Hong Kong and raised during the Kawit rites.

'However, the event turned out to be the last celebration because the republic started to crumble, leading to the eventual capture of Aguinaldo by Americans in Isabela on March 23, 1901.

Paras said Aguinaldo regarded the 1899 rites significant.

A copy of an English translation of his speech that day quoted Aguinaldo as describing the event as a commemoration of the "greatest event in our political evolution."

"[It was] the date on which the [Filipino] people, thirsting for liberty, justice and the exercise of their proper rights, thronged to Cavite, to carry out this highly patriotic manifestation, the beginning of a new era of progress and well-being for our idolized country, to the cry of 'The Philippines free and independent,'" said Aguinaldo.

"The Philippines is for the Filipinos," he said.

Luna protected the seat of the republic by putting up a defense line in the towns of Sta. Rita, Porac, Magalang, Mabalacat and Angeles.

These areas were secured by 25,000 soldiers with about 10,000 riflemen protecting Angeles as American forces captured Malolos in Bulacan and advanced toward San Fernando, Pampanga, according to local historian Daniel Dizon, 76.

The mansion served as headquarters of Gen. Arthur MacArthur until after the Filipino-American war in 1901.

"We are frustrated. Our national officials have given no value to this event when there are so much proof about its historical importance and to think that President Macapagal-Arroyo hails from Pampanga. We don't know their reasons for not coming. We hope it's not [because of] indifference," Paras told the INQUIRER on Thursday.

"We're still not losing hope that they would come. Their presence is a statement that the 1899 event is just as important in the struggle for freedom," he said.

The mansion still stands intact because the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, through its former governor, Jaime Laya, rescued it from dilapidation as well as sale by the heirs.

In 1976, the BSP spent P25 million to buy the lot and restore the house, said Dizon.

The BSP uses the mansion as an office, lending it only to the foundation every June 12.

THE PAMINTUAN mansion in Angeles City. CLAUDE TAYAG

Wrong body of slain OFW arrives in Cebu

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—"IS THIS THE REAL body of my husband?"

This was the first question of Loresa Monterola after a casket containing the body of her husband Abel arrived at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday at the Mactan Cebu International Airport.

The immediate family of Monterola was in shock Thursday after they discovered that morning that a body supposedly that of Abel, which arrived on Wednesday night, was found to be that of another slain worker Felix Llorando of Legazpi City.

Abel and Llorando were killed in the crossfire between security forces and suspected terrorists in Riyadh on Feb. 27. Three other Filipinos who were with Monterola and Llorando in the company vehicle that was shuttling them to the workplace were injured.

Loresa said she was saddened that her family had to grieve for her husband's death for over three months without seeing his body. She said they were relieved when they learned that it was arriving on Wednesday, only to find out it was not his.

The caskets of Abel and Llorando were brought by Saudi Arabian Airlines on Wednesday noon at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. From there, they were brought separately to Albay and Cebu in the evening.

The supposed body of Abel arrived at 6:45 p.m. on Wednesday. But Loresa said the casket was first brought to St. Peter Funeral Homes in Cebu City to defrost his body. At that time, Loresa said, she could no longer distinguish the body because it was decomposing and the face was very dark.

She said she had some doubts because the body in the casket did not have a mustache and medium build unlike her husband.

The following morning, Loresa said Abel's recruitment agency informed her about the mistake in a telephone call.

She also received a call from the wife of Llorando telling her that the bodies were switched.

"I couldn't describe my emotions at that time," she recalled.

Loresa said she was not asking for an apology from whoever made the mistake, as they were just too relieved that Abel's body has finally come home.

The wake will be held at the Monterola residence in Sabang, Danao City. His remains will be buried on June 11 in a city sanctuary.

Wilfreda Misterio, regional director of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, said personnel of the Department of Foreign Affairs in Riyadh could have made the mistake.

Misterio said the error could be traced to the mislabeling of the caskets or the lack of body nametags.

DFA spokesperson Gilbert Asuque, however, said the department could not be made liable because the shipping broker might have made the mistake.

He stressed that the government had already corrected the situation and made sure that the bodies were reunited with their real families.

Abel went to Riyadh in June 2004. His contract would have ended this month. He had planned to come home for good in August.

His 31st birthday was on Friday, Loresa said.

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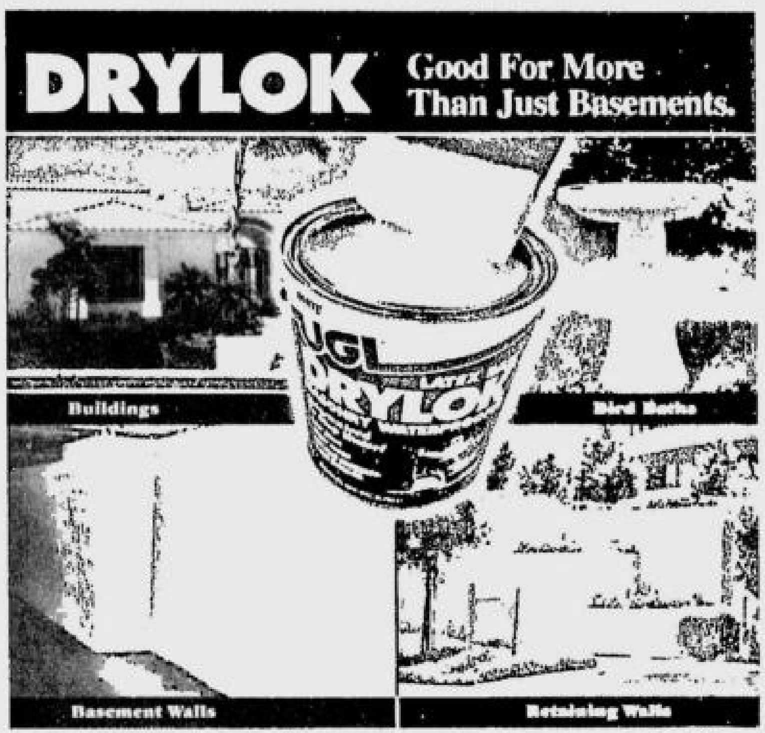

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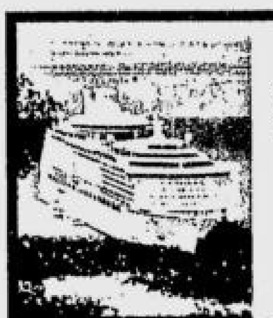

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Onboard Royal Caribbean's "FREEDOM OF THE SEAS"
SAILING DATE: July 16, July 23 and July 30

Starting From:	CRUISE ONLY	FLY/CRUISE
INTERIOR CABIN	$1,400.00	$ 2,600.00
OCEAN VIEW CABIN	$1,610.00	$ 2,810.00

PORT CHARGES: $ 185.80 per Person

• SAILING DATE: August 06, August 13 and August 20

Starting From:	CRUISE ONLY	FLY/CRUISE
INTERIOR CABIN	$1,200.00	$2,400.00
OCEAN VIEW CABIN	$1,390.00	$2,590.00

PORT CHARGES: $ 185.80 per Person

• 7N WESTERN CARIBBEAN CRUISE (MCO RT)
Onboard Royal Caribbean's "MARINER OF THE SEAS"
SAILING DATE: July 2, July 16, and July 30

Starting From:	CRUISE ONLY	FLY/CRUISE
INTERIOR CABIN	$ 780.00	$1,980.00
OCEAN VIEW CABIN	$1,060.00	$2,260.00

PORT CHARGES: $ 181.00 per Person

• 7N EASTERN CARIBBEAN CRUISE (MCO RT)
Onboard Royal Caribbean's "MARINER OF THE SEAS"
SAILING DATE: July 9 and July 23

Starting From:	CRUISE ONLY	FLY/CRUISE
INTERIOR CABIN	$ 830.00	$2,030.00
OCEAN VIEW CABIN	$1,260.00	$2,460.00

PORT CHARGES: $ 179.00 per Person

7-NIGHT ALASKA

• 7N ALASKA HUBBARD GLACIER CRUISE (SEA RT)
Onboard Royal Caribbean's "VISION OF THE SEAS"
SAILING DATE: July 28, August 4 and August 11

Starting From:	CRUISE ONLY	FLY/CRUISE
INTERIOR CABIN	$ 939.00	$1,989.00
OCEAN VIEW CABIN	$1,549.00	$2,599.00

PORT CHARGES: $ 225.60 per Person

• 7N ALASKA HUBBARD GLACIER CRUISE (SEA RT)
Onboard Celebrity's "MERCURY"
SAILING DATE: July 28, August 4 and August 11

Starting From:	CRUISE ONLY	FLY/CRUISE
INTERIOR CABIN	$1,230.00	$2,280.00
OCEAN VIEW CABIN	$1,375.00	$2,425.00
3rd/4th Passenger	$ 530.00	$1,580.00

PORT CHARGES: $ 214.65 per Person

• 7N VANCOUVER TO LOS ANGELES CRUISE (YVR-LAX)
Onboard Royal Caribbean's "RADIANCE OF THE SEAS"
SAILING DATE: September 16

Starting From:	CRUISE ONLY	FLY/CRUISE
INTERIOR CABIN	$ 310.00	$1,210.00
OCEAN VIEW CABIN	$ 360.00	$1,260.00
BALCONY CABIN	$ 560.00	$1,460.00
3rd/4th Passenger	$ 290.00	$1,190.00

PORT CHARGES: $ 223.84 per Person

7, 10 & 12-NIGHT EUROPE

• 7N GREEK ISLES & TURKEY CRUISE (VCE RT)
Onboard Royal Caribbean's "SPLENDOURS OF THE SEAS"
SAILING DATE: August 13 and August 27

Starting From:	CRUISE ONLY	FLY/CRUISE
INTERIOR CABIN	$1,044.00	$2,044.00
OCEAN VIEW CABIN	$1,244.00	$2,244.00

PORT CHARGES: $ 177.52 per Person

• 7N MEDITERRANEAN CRUISE (BCN RT)
Onboard Royal Caribbean's "VOYAGER OF THE SEAS"
SAILING DATE: Sept. 2, Sept. 16 and Sept. 30

Starting From:	CRUISE ONLY	FLY/CRUISE
INTERIOR CABIN	$ 684.00	$1,634.00
OCEAN VIEW CABIN	$1,164.00	$2,114.00

PORT CHARGES: $ 176.26 per Person

• 10N BEST OF MEDITERRANEAN CRUISE (FCO RT)
Onboard Celebrity's "GALAXY"
SAILING DATE:Aug. 4, Aug 25, Sept. 25

Starting From:	CRUISE ONLY	FLY/CRUISE
INTERIOR CABIN	$1,244.00	$2,144.00
OCEAN VIEW CABIN	$1,895.00	$2,795.00
3rd/4th Passenger	$ 804.00	$1,704.00

PORT CHARGES. $ 212.40 per Person

• 12N SCANDINAVIA & RUSSIA CRUISE (AMS RT)
Onboard Celebrity's "CENTURY"
SAILING DATE: August 14

Starting From:	CRUISE ONLY	FLY/CRUISE
INTERIOR CABIN	$1,494.00	$2,394.00
3rd/4th Passenger	$ 994.00	$1,894.00

PORT CHARGES. $ 297.84 per Person

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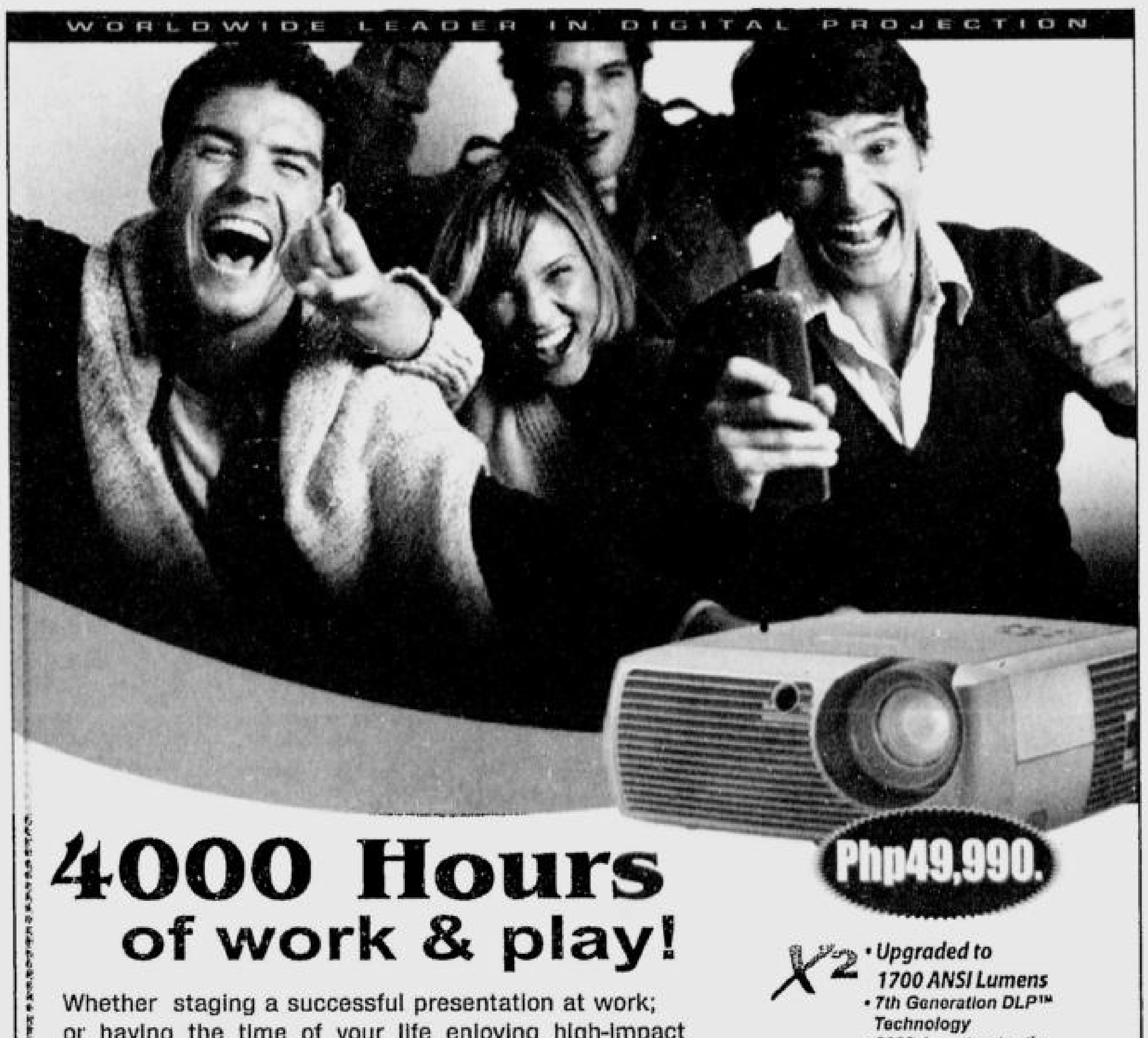

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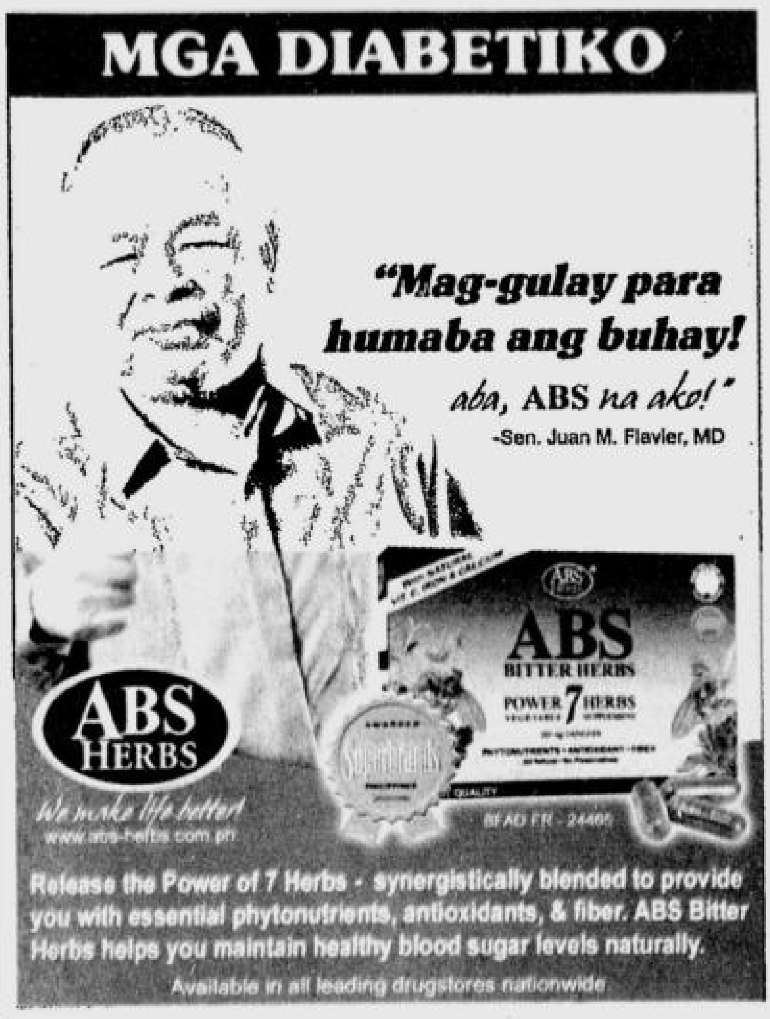

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Mt. Pinatubo's sand funds youth education in Bacolor

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

BACOLOR, PAMPANGA—THE SAND THAT MT. Pinatubo spewed out in its 1991 eruptions and which buried this town after succeeding lahar flows is the same mineral resource helping Anna Felisa Pineda and 573 other students here fulfill their dreams of getting an education.

Like last school year, the local government's P4-million revenue from sand hauling taxes is again being spent this year for the college scholarship of Pineda's batch, Mayor Romeo Dungca said.

The municipal government charges a P30 "regulatory tax" for every truckload of sand hauled out from quarry sites along the Pasig-Potrero river and in private land. Between 200 and 300 trucks get sand daily from the town, Dungca said.

He said earnings from the "white gold," as how sand is called in these parts, are used to pay the students' tuition and other fees, and monthly stipends of between P300 and P350.

At least 262 scholars are enrolled at the Don Honorio Ventura College of Arts and Trade (DHVCAT) and 143 at the San Vicente Pilot School for Philippine Craftsmen, both in this town. A total of 169 students are enrolled at various schools like the University of the Philippines, Holy Angel University and University of the Assumption.

They are enrolled in engineering, computer science, psychology, commerce, accountancy and education.

Like Pineda, who is on the dean's list at the University of the Assumption, many have received academic excellence awards as well.

Survivor

Pineda, 20, considers education her second battle now.

Ten years ago, at dawn of Oct. 1, 1995, she escaped the destructive trail of lahar by scaling their neighbor's two-story house in Barangay Cabalantian.

Without food, water and any help coming, she stuck it out with about 100 residents trapped in that roof for almost three days until they decided to walk out of that isolation. More rains, they thought, would bring more lahar and claim the roof that has become their "island of life."

Residents said about 1,000 people, mostly children, were buried in a single surge of between 7 and 15 meters high of lahar that time.

Pineda said her parents took turns in carrying her on their backs as they walked out of the devastation, heading toward east in the direction of nearby City of San Fernando, by clinging to telephone cables.

"It's difficult to be coming to school. We were resettled in Telapayong (Mexico town) and fare alone (at P100 daily) eats up my allowance," the bespectacled Pineda said.

She is due to finish her commerce course in March next year and looks forward to landing a job at once.

Rebuilding

Dungca said the "sand for education" program, which the local government started in 2001 on a P1-million budget, was actually an approach in rebuilding the town from the disaster.

Only two landmarks in the town have survived the 1991 eruptions and 1995 lahar onslaught—the 350-year-old San Guillermo Church and the DHVCAT, recognized as the oldest vocational school in Asia. Both structures are half-buried by lahar.

Most of the more than 67,000 residents at the time of the big lahar rampages in 1995 had fled, many of them still scattered in seven resettlement sites in various Pampanga towns.

As if that tragedy was not enough, Bacolor further lost 17 outlying villages when the national government built the FVR Megadike and ringed the communities as catch basin of lahar to be able to save the rest of the province.

Lost, too, were vast tracks of sugarcane fields, rice farms and fishponds that fostered the grand culinary banquets that Bacolor was known for throwing at any time of the year.

"We have rebuilt but rather slowly. The roads, bridges, churches, irrigation [system] are in place. But rehabilitation cannot be limited to structures. People should come first," Dungca told the INQUIRER as he met the scholars on Saturday.

"We thought that by helping the youth get an education, we are helping increase their chances to rise in life and their families as well. We are also building a pool of human resources that could help this town get back to its feet," he said.

Pioneers

Bacolor has produced many pioneers in the Philippine Catholic Church, hundreds of revolutionaries, five justices of the Supreme Court, seven legislators, seven governors, nine Cabinet members and four ambassadors.

It also prides itself of producing a long line of artists, educators, entrepreneurs, doctors, scientists, public servants, military officers and philanthropists, including Don Honorio Ventura who sent the late President Diosdado Macapagal to law school.

DHVCAT officials, teachers and other personnel refused to close the school even after disaster struck the town and even after the national government stopped giving the school fresh budgets due to threats of more lahar onslaught.

"If you succeed, don't just help yourself. Help others and help our town rise again," Dungca told the scholars.

Before Pineda's batch, nearly 100 students have obtained college degrees through the program. Some help out by teaching in the town, others by contributing expertise and labor in the local government's programs or their own communities.

Payback

Dungca said the educational scholarship did not have a payback system.

Without the sand revenues, the town's long tradition of putting a high regard on education would have been largely diminished, he said.

The town's internal revenue allotment (IRA) was reduced from P39 million to P20 million because of the sharp decrease in population, which was one of the bases of the IRA share.

That amount, Dungca said, had not been enough to provide the social services needed by the growing population of Bacolor, now at almost 100,000 in the resettlements.

Because tax opportunities remained little as only about 5,000 families have returned to settle permanently and a few companies have come to do business, Dungca said the municipal government could only rely on its good fortune of having a bountiful supply of sand needed in the construction industry.

On top of local sand revenues, the town also gets about P2 million in annual shares from the provincial government's quarry revenues.

What supplemental income the local government gets from sand quarrying is spent on maintaining the elementary schools in four revived villages and in paying the salaries of some 50 elementary and high school teachers in the resettlements.

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The Philippines enjoys one of the highest minimum wages in Asia.

COUNTRY/CITY	DAILY MINIMUM WAGE (country currency)	DAILY MINIMUM WAGE (IN US $)
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China/Beijing	20 Yuan	2.49
Indonesia/Jakarta	14,208.33 Rupiah	1.62
Thailand/Bangkok	175 Baht	4.66
Philippines/Metro Manila	**325 Pesos**	**6.26**
Malaysia	48.10 Ringgit	12.66
South Korea	22,720 Won	23.71
Singapore	73.33 Singapore Dollar	46.44

Labor Highlights

✓ Annual increases in daily minimum wage, except in SARS year 2003, from Php89 in 1989 to Php325 in 2005 with the Philippines having one of the highest minimum wages in Asia; higher than Thailand, Indonesia, China and Vietnam.

✓ Php46 Billion in non-wage benefits announced on May 1, 2006. Among these are: Php12 Billion for the condonation of SSS/GSIS salary and housing loan penalties; about Php7 Billion tax breaks in the form of withholding tax exemptions for minimum wage earners; and Php500 Million TESDA Business Process Outsourcing scholarships among others.

✓ Proactive conciliation and mediation program resulting in the lowest number of strikes in recent history and targeting zero strikes by 2010.

✓ Well-managed labor migration with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) ensuring legal recruitment and placement, and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) providing benefits and assistance, like the recent safe repatriation of workers from East Timor and Filipino prisoners from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

"Let us dream together. Let's be among the countries of the First World in 20 years" President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Department of Labor and Employment

Tutorial schools thriving businesses in Baguio

BRAND: RECYCLED
A man shows his son how to sew sacks to create an improvised raincoat. He collects used packaging materials to be sold to recycling shops for livelihood. EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—QUEUES FOR ENrollment in tutorial centers here were almost as long as those for mainstream schools this school term.

According to some teachers, this phenomenon suggests that parents will keep their children in school at all costs, even if that means mortgaging their farms.

The demand for tutors is fueled largely by the slump in students' performances in math, science and language, said Gloria Leal, who administers the 12-year-old Students Trained to Excel for Progress (Step) Center.

But the tutoring business also counts on parents who want their children to remain in top form throughout their school days up to college, while both parents work, Leal said.

While financial difficulty has forced some parents to negotiate the standard tutorial fee of P500 per hour to P250 a session, Leal said only a few have dropped tutorial sessions entirely from the household expense list.

Rosario Marfori-Marzo, head of the St. Louis University economics department, said the yearly tuition increases had not reduced enrollment.

She said enrollment records of most colleges and universities indicated that parents put uncommonly high value in education, despite rising tuition and fees, shortage in classrooms, and poor teaching quality.

Marzo said parents from other provinces had also realized that educational centers started sprouting around key industrial hubs where job opportunities are available.

The city, for example, hosts the Baguio City Economic Zone, where top exporter Texas Instruments Philippines Inc. and several call centers are located.

Many of these industries pick out their choice workers from the pool that schools closest to them end up graduating each year, Marzo said.

But diplomas alone no longer attract the industries, which have raised standards for quality communicators, she said.

This may account for the increase in language tutorial schools that train grade school pupils and adults in proper conversational English, Marfori said.

Leal said she tapped fellow linguists to become tutors of the Cordillera Training Center in 1993, when the business was just sprouting in Manila.

She said independent tutors became necessary because teachers were forbidden by employers to moonlight as tutors of their own students.

The business boomed between 1997 and 2002, Leal said, when tutors became "social cushions" for underachieving students.

She said tutors counsel children who could not cope with classroom lessons by providing special sessions.

"Our curriculum is not contrary to what is taught in school. We are not competition although we also undertake refresher courses like the ordinary teacher to match the latest world education standards," Leal said.

The economic crisis stunted the growth of many tutorial centers here, although it did not stop others from operating.

Sanctions urged on parents who can't raise kids well

"IF THEY CANNOT RAISE THEIR children well, put them behind bars."

A professor of the University of the Philippines Population Institute reasoned this way in appealing to congressmen to pass a bill imposing sanctions on parents who cannot provide for the needs and rights of their children.

"Basically, children's rights are [meant] to have good life and better future. If their parents could not give those to them and end up as the country's problems when they grow up, then let's impose sanctions," Dr. Zelda Zablan, chair of the Reproductive Health Advocacy Network of the UP institute, told the INQUIRER.

She reiterated that the country's population growth rate had remained "on the uptrend" and not even come close to the administration target of 1.94 percent.

Zablan's group is calling for increased use of contraceptive materials, such as condoms, pills and intrauterine devices, and tubal ligation and vasectomy.

The Catholic Church is opposing the bill because it suggests access to artificial birth control methods.

But Zablan said: "If they don't like to prevent pregnancy, it will only lead to abortion. It is [the] right of every child to be born and given a responsible life. Unwanted pregnancy will only lead to abortion."

Denia Diezon, a community development specialist of a World Bank-funded project in Central Mindanao, supported Zablan's appeal.

"It's better to prevent pregnancy than end up in abortion," Diezon said.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles told Zablan's group that deliberations of House Bill 4110 would be fast-tracked.

"It's controversial. We [will] see to it that it will be balanced. We want to discuss it publicly so that the people can vote diligently," he said.

Nograles said HB 4110 was included in the calendar of activities but he could not give assurance that the legislators would finish discussing the matter.

"I am in favor of the bill. In the Philippines, we have a factory of babies. But it's a numbers games (in passing bills). If you have no numbers, you lose. I urge those lobbying for the bill to convince their respective congressmen to vote for the bill," he said. *Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

15 private high schools in E. Visayas raise tuition

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—THE DEPARTment of Education in Eastern Visayas has approved the application of 15 private high schools in the region to increase tuition from five to 10 percent this school year.

With the new round of increases, education officials are bracing for an exodus of students from private schools to government-run high schools.

Brenda Estoy, chief of the secondary education division of DepEd-8, said the approved increases in tuition were below the ceiling imposed by the department.

Under DepEd Order No. 20, series of 1994, any increase asked by the schools must not exceed 10 percent. Estoy said that of the 15 schools that would impose increase this school year, 11 are in Leyte, three in Southern Leyte, and one in Northern Samar.

Those in Leyte are the St. Therese's Academy in Hilongos; St. Mary's Academy in Palo; Notre Dame of Jaro in Jaro; Notre Dame of Abuyog and Abuyog Academy, both in Abuyog; Holy Trinity College in Alangalang; St. Joseph's High School in Dagami; Holy School High School in Villaba; St. Joseph Academy of Leyte in Matalom; Holy Cross Academy in Carigara and Colegio de San Francisco in Javier.

Those in Southern Leyte are the Sto. Niño Academy in Malitbog; Christo Rey Regional High School in St. Bernard, and the Libagon Academy Foundation in Libagon.

In Northern Samar, the St. Joseph Academy in San Jose town imposed a 10-percent tuition increase.

The DepEd rejected the application of the Grelino Osmeña Christian College in Hilongos, Leyte because it proposed a 35-percent increase but had no resolution of support from the Parents Teachers Association.

Eastern Visayas has 374 public secondary schools.

DepEd assistant regional director Alberto Escobarte said he would not know yet how many from the private schools would transfer from private to public schools this year but he believed the number would be high.

Last school year, 30,442 students enrolled in 110 private high schools in the region, while 242,908 students were enrolled in public high schools for 2005-06.

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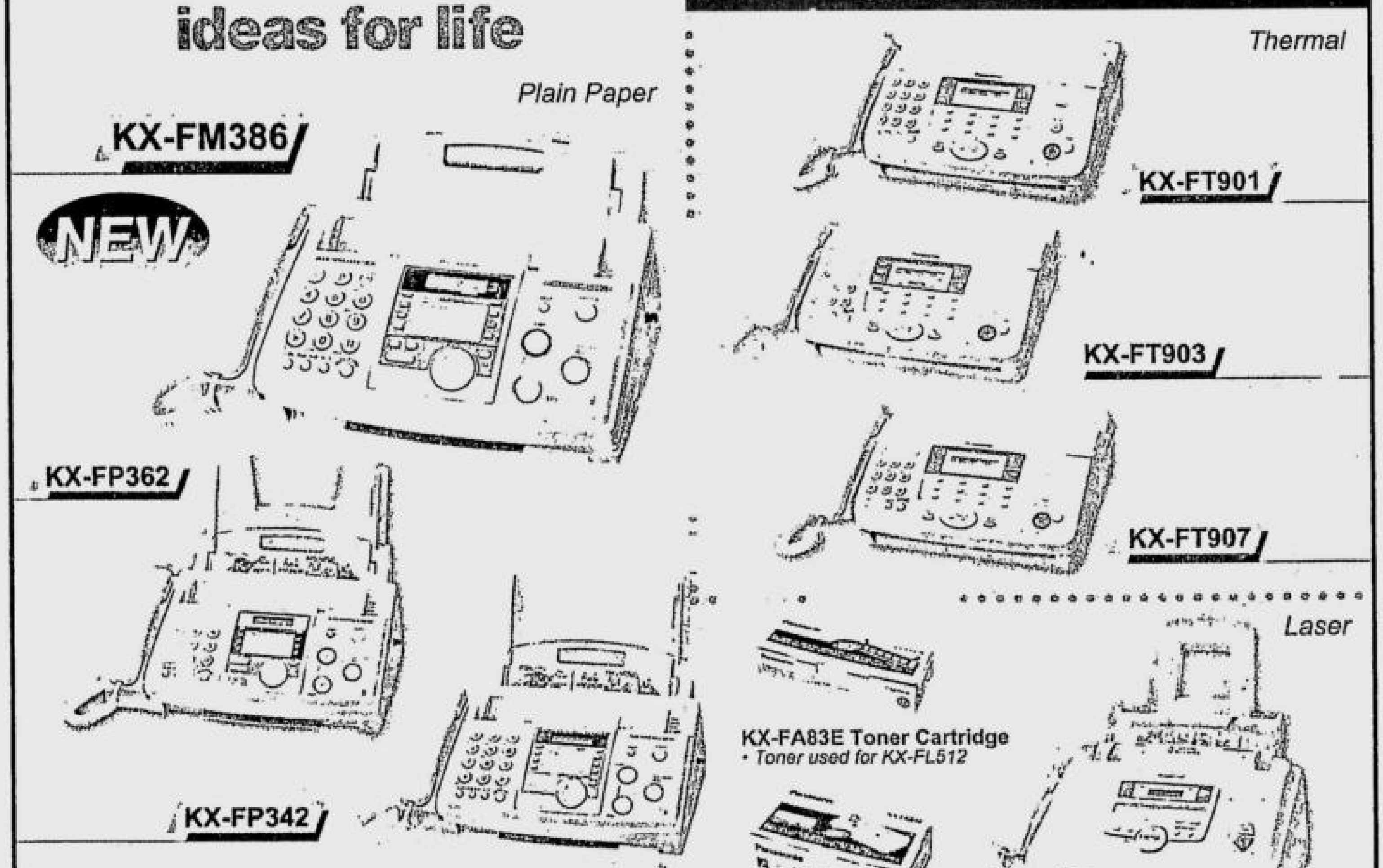

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Teachers may be RP education's weak link

By Volt Contreras

SO YOU THOUGHT YOU HAD "terror" teachers in grade school who gave quizzes almost every day, or "inspiring" ones who made you sing or clean the room leisurely for several minutes during class.

Think again. Such types of mentors may ironically represent one of the major weaknesses of the country's public education system.

Studies cited by the Department of Education have shown Filipino students generally doing poorly in Math and Science because, among other factors, they tend to spend too many hours on tests or activities unrelated to the subject.

Unnecessary exams and tasks eat up precious classroom minutes which the teacher should instead be spending on in-depth lectures, applications or problem-solving exercises that need not be graded, according to a former DepEd official.

Devoting less "time-on-task" is a dismaying reflection of a teacher's competence, said former Education Undersecretary Juan Miguel Luz, quoting findings of the 1998 Trends in Math and Science Survey (TIMSS).

"If you are a teacher with little knowledge of what you're teaching, the first thing you tend to do at the start of class is tell your pupils to 'Okay, take out a piece of paper and let's have a quiz.'

"This is because the quiz will probably take up to 20 minutes, the checking would take another 10, passing the paper and filing them, a few more. And before you know it, the teacher would be saying 'Whew! I'm done for the day, thank goodness,'" Luz said.

Time-wasting tests

Test and quizzes are not always reliable indicators of a student's achievement but merely "time-wasting devices" for some teachers, he noted. "The best teachers are those who polish the students' skills without having to grade them every day."

In the TIMSS findings, the Philippines was actually found to have the 'highest amount of instruction time devoted to Math in the world" at 193 hours a year compared with the 107 to 145 hours a year in the best-performing countries.

But this edge goes to waste because "too much time [is spent] on other activities not related to content" and not enough time is set aside for problem-solving and interactive learning, said Luz, who once taught Math in a private high school in Bacolod City,

He said this reminded him of what he had observed in the public school that stood next to his campus. "Every day, I could see from my own classroom how the teachers (in that other school) made the pupils sing or clean the room almost every hour. I thought, 'How could these kids really learn?'"

A World Bank study on education considered the role of teachers the "single most influential factor" behind a student's performance. Although other resources like books and school buildings affect performance, it is still teachers who leave the biggest impact.

Consider this: An elementary school teacher in the country, with 30 years experience, is likely to have handled 1,200 to 2,400 students as a "homeroom" teacher or class adviser by the time he or she retires.

Disturbing scenario

But what happens when a teacher faces a class despite being ill-trained in the very lessons he's supposed to impart? The DepEd said more than half of high school science teachers, for example, were in such a disturbing situation.

Of the total number who teach General Science, only 42 percent had majored in that subject; Biology teachers, only 44 percent; Chemistry, 34 percent, and Physics, 27 percent. The only encouraging ratio is among Math teachers, of whom 80 percent are math majors.

Non-majors

"Hence, there is this joke in school faculties whenever there are so few 'majors' to go around: If we lack Physics teachers, maybe someone who majored in Physical Education would do," Luz said wryly.

A "non-major" being forced to teach subjects outside his specialization would usually "just pick up the textbook and repeat what's in the textbook. What kind of learning is that?" he said.

"The solution is to put teachers back to school"—preferably during summer so as not to affect their regular class schedules, said Luz, who during his DepEd tenure pushed for an allotment of at least "P1 billion per summer" in the agency's budget for this purpose.

That money, he said, could equip 50,000 teachers each summer over the next five years with "minor" courses in Math, English and Science worth 18 units each.

Until such measures and other reforms take hold, a great number of Filipino students will likely continue to break merrily into song or survive one "surprise quiz" after another—and still miss out entirely on learning's real joys.

CLASSES resume along the corridor at the Geronimo Santiago School in Manila in this file photo.

PDI PHOTO

Learning test scores below world average

From page A1

levels of learning that will help our children become productive adults," says former Education Undersecretary Juan Miguel Luz.

"We, as a country, cannot allow this to continue if we are to build a foundation for development, growth and equity to deal with our many problems that range from eradicating poverty to being internationally competitive," Luz says.

It will take the Philippines 11 to 12 years to narrow the gap with the world average in achievement tests and 25 to 28 years to reach the Singapore level, says the DepEd in a presentation to the Cabinet in July 2005.

Few land ICT jobs

Only 2-7 percent of college graduate applicants land jobs in ICT or information communications technology. And they still require three months of in-house training before they become fully productive, according to industry surveys cited by the DepEd.

The health department says only 54 percent of practicing doctors in the Visayas passed competency tests. It says 56 percent would correctly admit a patient, 42 percent would administer the correct drugs, and 45 percent would correctly administer oxygen in respiratory cases.

Poor reading skills in English account for the dismal performance of students in Math and Science. A majority of Science teachers and a significant percentage of those handling Math are not majors in those fields.

Moreover, Filipino teachers do little supervised student teaching or practicum in education before the licensing or probationary teaching period, unlike their counterparts in best-performing countries. This is according to the TIMSS tests conducted in 1998 and 2003.

Investment needed

To improve the scores, investment is needed.

The DepEd says a regular public high school where P4,600 is spent for each student, the passing rate for Upcat (University of the Philippines College Admission Tests) is 20 percent.

In a science-oriented high school where P17,900 is spent per student, the Upcat passing mark is 41 percent. Spending for each student in the Philippine Science High School is P68,800. Its Upcat passing rate is 90 percent.

Education began getting the priority in the Philippine scheme of things after the Edsa "People Power" uprising that ousted dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986.

It now has the biggest share of the national budget as mandated by the 1987 Constitution.

In the Appropriations Act of 2006, which has yet to be approved, the allocation is P102.6 billion.

But even that will not be enough to deal with problems besetting the education system. There are some 20 million elementary and high school students to attend to. Close to 4 million of them are in private schools, the rest are in public facilities.

As in previous years, 85 percent of that money will go to teachers.

There's not enough money for operational needs in 42,000 barangays to allow "universal access" to education.

When the financial crisis hit the Philippines several years ago, many households transferred their children from private to public schools.

Without adequate financing, the fundamental state objective to make citizens cope with the demands of development—their own and that of the nation's—cannot be adequately met.

Former Education Secretary Florencio Abad says the annual budget allocation for the department remains minuscule relative to the problem.

"If you speak of what the system needs to improve competencies, improve infrastructure, to push for a dramatic improvement in teaching competencies, it's very little," Abad says.

Budget share small

The DepEd says its share of the budget is actually 12 percent.

Abad says it should be 20 percent.

Vietnam, which basically has the same number of students as the Philippines, is increasing education's share of its budget to 22 percent next year, says Abad. It is fielding about a million teachers for the same number of students as the Philippines'.

Here, teachers number only half of what Vietnam has.

It is not a question of money, Abad says. It is about setting priorities right. He points to the P300-billion-a-year fiscal incentives program.

"We are giving up revenues for incentives to all sorts of businesses that, I think, most anyway don't need," he says. "If you want to go into business, you go into business. Why do you have to go to business with the government holding your hand?" he says, laughing.

LGUs get huge share

In fact, Abad says, local government units get the lion's share of the budget through its portion of the property tax and the internal revenue allocation. "There's a lot of money there," he says.

Outside of the national budget, capital could come from the private sector.

Through the "Adopt a School" program initiated by former Secretary Edilberto de Jesus, tax incentives yielded P350 million from October 2002 to August 2004. The money was used anywhere from building classrooms to financing feeding programs.

The Special Education Fund derived from 1 percent of real estate taxes collected by local school boards has an annual potential of 14 billion. It has so far managed P7 billion annually.

The DepEd has enlisted assistance from the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, among many other organizations, to construct and rehabilitate classrooms at a lower cost. Some of its members are already subsidizing the cost of materials and services in response to DepEd calls.

The chamber constructed 482 classrooms for 2002-03.

Still, the common lament is that Philippine classes are overcrowded. In addition, few Filipino households have books, or study desks, and only a tiny fraction of the population has computers.

Alcuin Papa

Average scores in Math and Science

Eight grade students in selected countries (1999 and 2003)

	Math		Science	
Country	1999	2003	1999	2003
Singapore	604	605	568	578
Korea	587	589	549	558
Hong Kong	582	586	530	556
Japan	579	570	550	552
Malaysia	519	508	492	510
United States	502	504	515	527
Indonesia	403	411	435	420
Philippines	345	378	345	377
International Average	487	466	488	473

Source: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

Compiled by: Chona Galang, PDI Research

Private sector assistance to public education

FEDERATION OF FILIPINO-CHINESE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY INC. (FFCCCII)
- 1999 Has build 3,200 two-room school houses since 1960
- 2000 Monitors and lower the prices of schools supplies in Divisoria

AYALA FOUNDATION INC. (AFI)
- 2001 Project GILAS, aims to connect 5,500 public high schools nationwide to the Internet.
- 2002 Text2Teach, enables the teacher in remote village to obtain educational video clips by requesting through text.

FOUNDATION FOR THE UPGRADING OF EDUCATION (FUSE)
- 2003 Produced instructional tapes. Constel (Continuing Studies through Education).
- 2004 Offers scholarships

FOUNDATION FOR WORLDWIDE PEOPLE POWER
- 2005 Conducted workshops in "Mentoring the Mentors" program to enhance teachers' skills in preparing lesson plans.
- 1999 "Local Mobilization Strategy" program involves parents, donors and institutions into physical improvement in the school community.

Compiled by: Chona Galang, PDI Research

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Malacañang won't cross DepEd Bridge

By Volt Contreras

ITS PROPONENTS IN THE DEpartment of Education had hailed it as the "bridge" that would, in the long-term, enable the country's public school system to finally catch up with the rest of the world.

At the last minute, however, Malacañang saw it more as a tightrope which President Macapagal-Arroyo could not afford to walk, especially after the controversial presidential election of May 2004.

In the end, the DepEd's Bridge Program—a scheme calling for remedial classes for the poorest performing Grade 6 students before they could enter high school—was sacrificed and its scope drastically reduced in the name of political expediency.

This was according to former Education Undersecretary Juan Miguel Luz, who did not hide his frustration with the administration when he resigned last April.

In a recent INQUIRER interview, Luz disclosed how the fate of the Bridge Program was ultimately decided—not by education experts but by "certain political advisers" of Ms Arroyo.

The program, he said, was ready for implementation during the opening of classes in June 2004.

The DepEd was raring to go, not only because the Palace (back then) was in full support of the program but also because an earlier Social Weather Stations survey had shown that 70 percent of the people approved of such a measure, with only 20 percent against and 10 percent undecided.

Election casualty

"But then what happened? We had elections," he said. "And weeks after the elections, we still had no proclamation (of the winning President)."

"Then Malacañang said, 'Wait a minute, this (Bridge) might become a proclamation issue.' Malacañang came to us and told us to drop it," Luz said.

Certain political advisers saw a problem with the 30 percent of respondents who were not in favor or were undecided, he said. "They said the President should worry about them because they were the ones who might rally against her during the preproclamation stage."

Luz said the advisers assumed that the 30 percent were supporters of FPJ (Ms Arroyo's closest rival, movie actor Fernando Poe Jr.) who could turn it into an issue against the President.

Luz said then Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus was at the Cabinet meeting, held sometime in June 2004, where such "concerns" were raised about the Bridge Program.

Disappointment

After that meeting, De Jesus returned to DepEd, "called us all together and said: 'You won't believe what happened.' We were very disappointed."

Before his DepEd post, Luz was a professor at the Asian Institute of Management and headed its Center for Corporate Responsibility. He is now president of the nongovernment organization International Institute of Rural Reconstruction.

He is the older brother of Guillermo "Bill" Luz, executive director of the Makati Business Club, some of whose leaders last year called for Ms Arroyo to step down at the height of the "Hello Garci" scandal.

With the education department then led by De Jesus, "we resisted moves to have the Bridge shut down, so it merely became voluntary," Luz said.

During its first run as an "optional" program, the program only managed to draw some 240,000 public elementary school graduates to take refresher courses in English, Science and Math.

A fraction of projection

The number was but a fraction of what the DepEd projected had Bridge remained a compulsory program. This was because up to 98 percent of the 1.4 million Grade 6 graduates that year had flunked the High School Readiness Test (HSRT), which the DepEd administered in May 2004.

Those who failed the HSRT were supposed to take the program.

Luz said the scheme was designed to smoothly adjust the system and "condition" the reluctant public for the eventual addition of two more years to the basic education program—one year in elementary and another in high school.

The long-term plan was, after five years of implementing Bridge, that period of remedial classes would be considered the freshman year of a five-year high school curriculum. At the grade school level, on the other hand, the government would require what is now considered preschool to become the new Grade 1 of the basic elementary package, hence adding one year and producing a Grade 7.

2 countries holding out

"There are only two countries left in the world that have 10 years (of basic education)—ours and Morocco in Africa," Luz sighed. "The rest of the world has been adding years."

"Are you telling me that we are so smart, that our children are that superior, that we can take up in 10 years what even developed countries strive to learn in 12 or more? If so, then why are we doing poorly?" he said.

"Even Myanmar (Burma) has 11 and everybody else has 12 years. In Singapore if you want to go to college you have to spend 13 years (of basic education) first."

The problem is not with any weakness in the Philippine curriculum, he maintained. "Ours is still basically the same as that of the rest of the world—US, Japan, developed countries."

Calculus

An example common to those curriculums is Calculus as a subject in the high school senior year. "But in other countries you already have spent 12 years before you get to Calculus. Here we think our children can already do it after 10 years. No way, no way," the former education undersecretary said.

Adding years of schooling to the same curriculum enables students "to learn longer and deeply," Luz said.

"For what is happening with our 10-year cycle is that the child learns a little bit of this and a little of that, an introduction to this and an introduction to that. Ask them at the end of the day and they couldn't elaborate because they don't know enough," he said.

He recalled how the DepEd under De Jesus was roundly criticized, especially by some politicians, for being "antipoor" when the agency pushed for the additional years.

These critics bewailed the additional expenses to be entailed by sending children to more years of "hardship" in school, he said.

"Why would some people who believe their own children should get up to 14 years of basic education from prep upward now turn around and tell the public school kids that 10 years for them will do? What really bothers me is that we have a two-class education system," Luz said.

Basic Education Cycle

Selected countries

Country	No. of years
Singapore	13
Brunei	13
Malaysia	12
Thailand	12
Indonesia	12
Vietnam	12
Cambodia	11
Laos	11
Myanmar	11
Philippines	10
Global norm	12

2000-2004 Unesco survey of 180 countries

- 96% of countries surveyed have 11-13 years schooling.
- Only five countries have 10 years of schooling—Armenia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal and the Philippines

Source: 2000-2004 Unesco survey of 180 countries PDI Research

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Congress adds P4B to budget of DepEd

From page A1

of the Senate panel.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, chair of the House panel, said: "There's a consensus to put more money in education."

As the panels were reconciling their versions of the budget, Malacañang announced that there would be no tuition hike for state universities and colleges (SUCs) this school year.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) had released P285 million in tuition support for all SUCs. Through the support fund, the government will shoulder the burden of tuition increases.

Villar, chair of the Senate committee on finance, said increasing DepEd's budget in the range of P2.6 billion to P4.6 billion would cover the shortage in classrooms alone. But he said he was open to raising the amount to address the shortage in textbooks and teachers.

"Whatever is needed, the Senate is willing to give. If we are going to solve one problem, we might as well solve all," he said, after emerging from the 45-minute, closed-door conference at the Philippine Coconut Authority building in Quezon City.

Meeting of minds

The bicameral conference added P2 billion for school buildings to DepEd's budget.

"I'm glad that the first bicam meeting is a meeting of the minds as far as improving the budget for education is concerned—in a more comprehensive manner," Sen. Ralph Recto said.

The issue of classroom shortages came to the fore on Tuesday when President Macapagal-Arroyo scolded acting Education Secretary Fe Hidalgo for admitting there was a backlog of 6,832 classrooms on a 45:1 pupil-classroom ratio.

A furious Ms Arroyo corrected Hidalgo, pointing out that the administration had dealt with the shortage through the strategy of double shifting, in which classrooms are used twice a day, and the shortage is calculated on a 100:1 ratio.

At the bicameral conference committee, the House panel members, who approved a P1.040-trillion budget, demanded that the outlay be restored in full to P1.053-trillion, saying this was "the level of spending" needed to create growth.

Pork

But their counterparts in the Senate, who passed a leaner P1.027-trillion budget on Thursday by slashing "pork barrel" items, did not yield and said they would study this following consultations with other senators.

"I would consider that a deadlock, but with some promise," said Salceda, who also chairs the House committee on appropriations.

Both panels will meet again today and in the coming days, hoping that they could narrow the huge gaps in their versions and pass the long-delayed budget this week when Congress adjourns.

Full restoration

"The position of the House is full restoration," Salceda said, pointing out that a P1.053-trillion budget was "the level of public spending on infrastructure that is necessary to create growth."

In the first quarter, the "biggest booster" to the gross domestic product was the 17-percent increase in public spending on infrastructure, he said.

"Let's maintain that because that's the level of spending that is necessary to grow the economy by at least 6 percent this year," Salceda said, referring to the Malacañang-proposed P1.053-trillion budget.

The senators, however, stuck by the P26-billion cut they made in the programmed funds, including the P3-billion Kilos Asenso Fund and P3.69-billion Kalayaan Barangay Program Fund, both viewed as pork barrel.

Paranoia

Rep. Eduardo Zialcita of Parañaque City described as "political paranoia" the opposition's claim that the President would use the funds for Charter change.

The Kilos Asenso Fund is intended to be the national government counterpart fund for local government projects, while the Kalayaan fund is supposed to finance livelihood and infrastructure projects in areas facing insurgency.

"We didn't agree on the House position that we restore all the cuts and, in effect, pass a budget similar to the one proposed by the President. Our position is to stick with our amendments. That's nothing unusual," Villar said.

"While we were ready to hear their arguments, it will be difficult for us to restore the cuts because we believe that the cuts are necessary. And we also believe that if the other items were not slashed, these should have been realigned to other sectors like education," he said.

The Senate also argued that its version would result in a lower deficit, an argument echoed by the House.

Salceda said the House panel would question the cuts in capital expenditures, including the P4 billion in the public works department's P54-billion budget and the P2 billion in the transportation department's P13-billion outlay.

"The bulk of the cuts they made were really on capital expenditures, which is the growth-inducing portions of the spending," he said. "Roads, bridges are the things that create growth in the economy."

Meet halfway

Villar, however, said the senators were open to meeting the congressmen halfway in order to pass the budget, and avoid operating on the reenacted 2005 budget of P907.56 billion for the rest of the year.

"It's hard to say that we will not yield even just a little, otherwise this bicam would be useless," he said.

Other items the House panel would raise in coming meetings include the senators' decision to slash the P57-billion unprogrammed funds by P37 billion, leaving little for "prespending flexibility," according to Salceda.

"This severely curtails the executive's ability to replace slow-moving programmed projects. The key issue is opportunities for economic expansion and poverty reduction which we would miss with the cuts," Villar said.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye described the Palace-proposed budget as a "people's budget" designed for their needs and aspirations. *With reports from Michael Lim Ubac and Christine O. Avendaño*

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DEFENDERS US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld (left) chats up Australian Defense Minister Brendan Nelson, Indian Defense Minister Pranab Mukherjee, New Zealand Defense Minister Phil Goff and Philippine Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz before the ministerial lunch during the Asia Security Summit in Singapore Saturday. *(See story on Page A13)* REUTERS

Erap tells US court he never got secret files

By Norman Bordadora

OUSTED PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA HAS denied receiving classified US government documents from a former Philippine National Police officer and a former US intelligence analyst found guilty of spying in the United States.

In a deposition he sent to the lawyer of Michael Ray Aquino in the US, Estrada also said he neither solicited nor did he encourage either Aquino or Leandro Aragoncillo to filch US government files to pass on to him.

"I never had an agreement with Leandro Aragoncillo, Michael Ray Aquino or anybody else to access classified US government documents in order to obtain information for myself or others or for any other purpose," Estrada said.

Aquino was a former PNP officer who fled to the US years ago to escape charges in the murder of public relations man Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and the latter's driver, Emmanuel Corbito.

Aragoncillo is a former US Marine who joined the Federal Bureau of Investigation as an intelligence analyst and worked at one point in the White House.

Guilty plea

He recently pleaded guilty to espionage for illegally obtaining classified information on Philippine leaders from White House computers and passing these on to Aquino, who in turn allegedly passed them on to Estrada and other personalities in the Philippines, including Sen. Panfilo Lacson and former Speaker Noli Fuentebella.

Estrada sent the deposition last week to Marc Berman, Aquino's lawyer.

Berman is expected to present Estrada's deposition to the New Jersey court hearing the espionage case against Aquino when the trial resumes on June 15.

The American lawyer had been working to be allowed by the court to depose Aquino's alleged contacts in the Philippines. The proceedings are usually videotaped to be played back in the US court. Estrada, however, gave a written deposition.

In the paper he sent to Berman, Estrada said he was "not inclined at the moment to travel to the United States in the case entitled United States v Michael Ray Aquino."

No documents received

"I never received classified US Government documents or information from Leandro Aragoncillo and/or Michael Ray Aquino by e-mail, telephone or text messages," Estrada said in the deposition dated May 23.

He said he didn't even know that Aquino or Aragoncillo had access to US government files and were willing to steal these.

"Michael Ray Aquino and/or Leandro Aragoncillo never told or even suggested that he/they were willing or able to access US government documents," Estrada said.

In previous pronouncements to the local media, however, Estrada had said that there was nothing classified in the documents on the Philippine situation prepared by US authorities that he had seen.

"There was nothing new but US Embassy reports to Washington about our economy, peace and order, corruption, human rights violations. I read them all in our newspapers every day," Estrada was quoted as saying.

Estrada had told the INQUIRER that he had shown the documents to people in the administration like Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor and National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales.

"If those were classified, why would I show them?" Estrada had said.

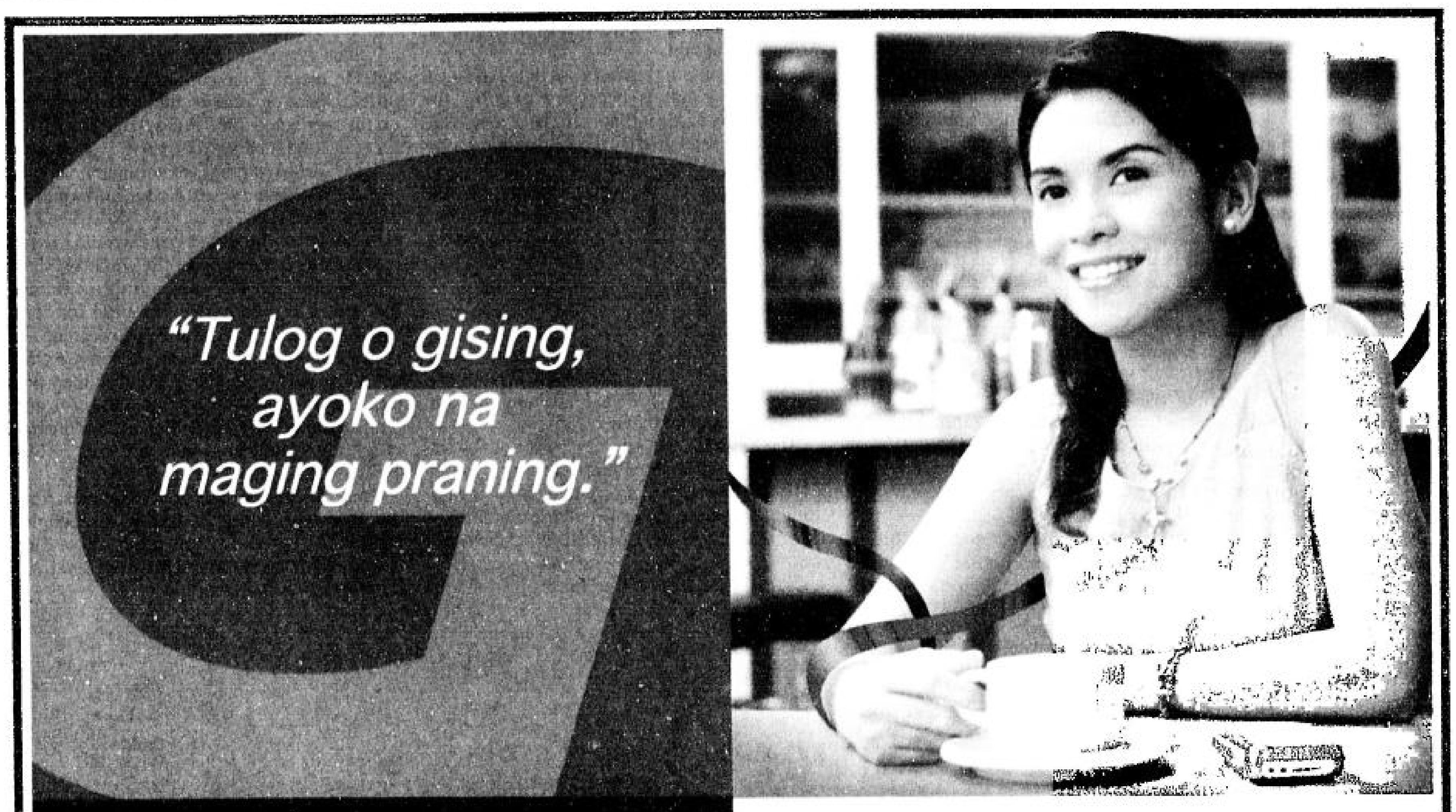
Kalaw is new DAP president

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE DEVElopment Academy of the Philippines, which provides education, training, research and consulting services to the government and other stakeholders, has announced the appointment of Antonio D. Kalaw Jr. as 7th DAP president.

He succeeds Eduardo T. Gonzalez who retired.

A graduate of the University of the Philippines where he also took up masteral courses in public administration, Kalaw is a career executive services officer (Ceso) with more than 30 years experience in project management and development as well as local governance, revenue generation, human and logistical resource management.

He rose through the ranks at DAP and is connected to the Patnubay sa Kaunlaran Foundation, Tagaytay Peoples' Economic Council for Responsible Voting, Handog Tulong Community, Tagaytay Tourism Council, Tagaytay City Advisory Council, Presidential Task Force on the Relief and Rehabilitation of Baguio, Cavite Integrated Development Foundation, among other groups.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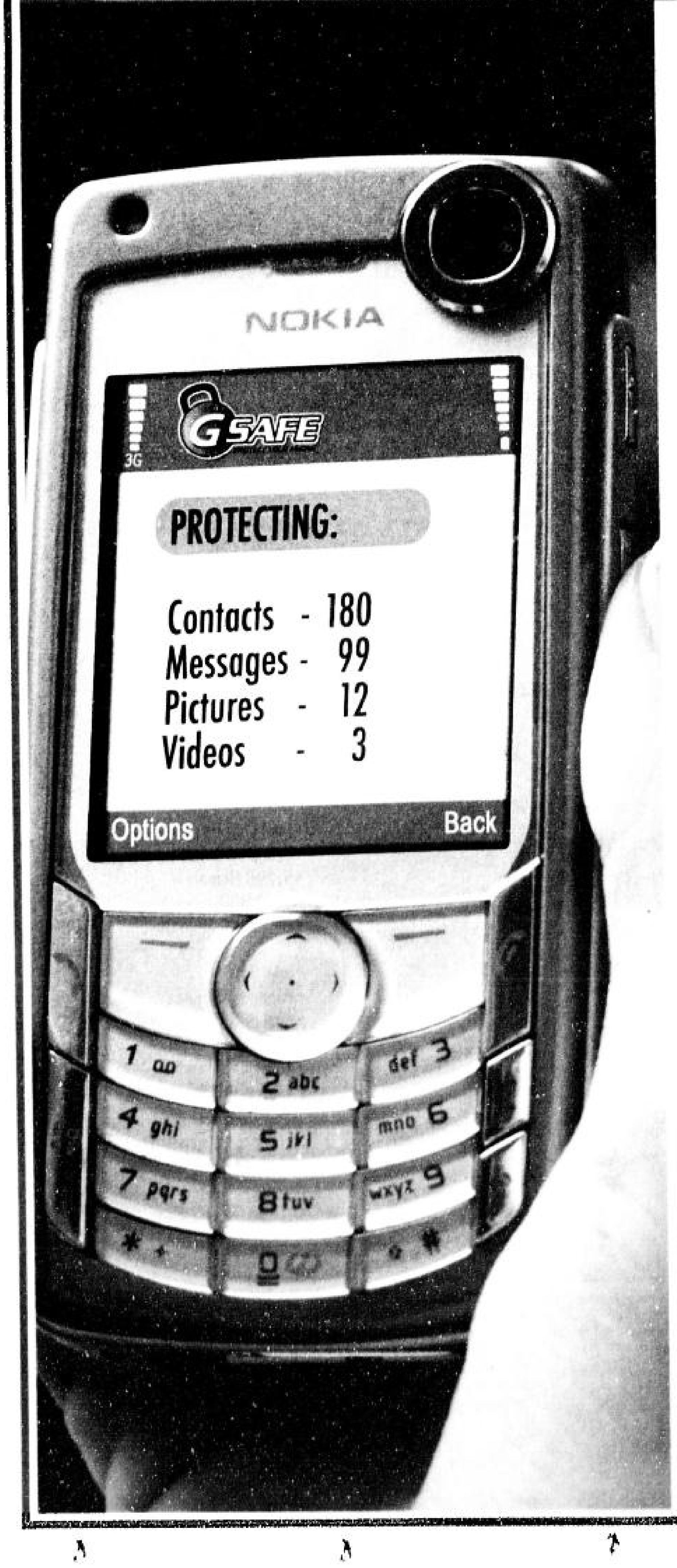

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Home schooling catches on in RP

Celebrities, athletes, teen moms avail of alternative learning program

By DJ Yap, Bayani San Diego Jr. and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

PAOLO Contis

JOHN Prats

SHARON Cuneta

AS STUDENTS GO back to school this month, some of them will not be physically present in the classroom. Instead of the traditional school setting, they will be studying at home, usually in front of the computer. Their guide will not be a teacher, but modules which they can accomplish at their own pace.

Compared to the United States, home schooling is a relatively new phenomenon in the Philippines. There are no official figures on the number of home schoolers in the country although there are some schools and institutions that offer a Home Study Program.

One of these is the ABS-CBN Distance Learning Center (DLC) which is accredited by the Department of Education. For all intents and purposes, the center is a "regular high school with a curriculum one can find in any secondary learning institution," according to DLC director Ma. Cristina Gonzales.

The difference lies in the methods, she said. Unlike most schools, teachers at the DLC adopt a specially flexible timetable for their students, rather than the other way around.

Commitment necessary

"We try to remove the rituals and rigidity of schooling, but not altogether. There also has to be certain levels of commitment on the part of the school and the students," Gonzales said.

A few of the center's graduates include young stars Camille and John Prats, Carlo Aquino and Paolo Contis, to name a few.

Students at the center are divided into two programs: home school and semi-regular. The semi-regular program requires students to attend classes four times a week, while the home school program allows students to study at their own pace.

But the grading system and requirements such as exams and projects are the same for both, Gonzales said.

The semi-regular program, under which most of the students are enrolled, is very similar to typical schools, in which classes are held from Tuesday to Friday between 9:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. at the Talent Center Building in the ABS-CBN compound.

The home school program, on the other hand, requires students to come to school only during the periodic tri-mestral exams, to submit their projects or participate in special school activities.

Self-contained modules

They are provided with modules and worksheets that are "self-contained," meaning the students do not need special instruction to learn the lessons.

They are, however, encouraged to arrange consultations with their teachers if they are having trouble with certain subjects, said Don De Guzman, one of the teachers at the Center.

A case-to-case basis approach is used for home school students, depending on their needs or availability, he added.

"The good thing about DLC is that the teachers can focus their energies on each student one at a time. The lessons are also very advanced," said Serri Ann, a 19-year-old home school student in her senior year. She prefers home study to regular schooling be-

HOME/A26

IN THE KNOW

Home Schooling in the Philippines

The Home Study Program (also known as home schooling) is a curriculum offered to students who, for one reason or another, cannot be physically present in the classroom everyday. With the use of Self-Learning Modules, this program allows the home schooler to study at home at his own pace and time. As soon as they are ready, they may report to school for the checking of the accomplished modules and for examinations that are intended to validate the performance.

Some of the schools that offer the program are:

Angelicum College-Home Study Program
112 M. J. Cuenco St., Quezon City
Trunk line: 7121745
Direct line : 4158557

Colegio de San Juna de Letran-Home Study Program
121 Muralla Street, Intramuros, Manila
Trunk Lines: 5277693 to 97 loc. 33 (admission office)
Direct line: 5279730 (admission office)

Rizal Experimental Station and Pilot School for Cottage Industries
Barangay Maybunga, Pasig City
Tel. no.-8053090

St. Francis of Assissi College
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Trunk line: 8003131

ABS-CBN Distance Learning Center
Trunk line: 4152272

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Whiz kid ready for school

At age 5, this incoming Grade II student can't wait for classes to begin

By Tina G. Santos

ADRIAN "ADI" MARONILLA JR., the 5-year-old whiz kid from Victoria, Oriental Mindoro, is so excited to go back to school that he wants his classes to start a week earlier.

However, classes at the Headway School for Giftedness, a private school in Quezon City that accommodates regular to gifted children with IQs ranging from 120 and above, won't begin until next Monday.

"Sometimes, I'm excited but June 13 is very late, I want it to be June 5," Adi, whose IQ (intelligence quotient) is 144, told the INQUIRER.

An incoming Grade II student, Adi is the youngest among his classmates. "Actually his grade level is ninth month of the second grade, *konti na lang* (just a little more), grade three *na* (and he could have been in Grade III)," his dad, Adrian Sr. said.

Adi's subjects this coming school year include Communication Arts, Civics and Culture, Science, Math, English, Filipino, Values Education and Computer Education.

He will also have Theater, Creative Writing and Art classes, his father added.

Adi's excitement, however, is marred by thoughts about his friends in Mindoro.

"He often feels sad. Sometimes, he even cries whenever he thinks of his friends back home. But in time, we know Adi will get used to his new life here," said the boy's parents, who decided to relocate to the city after they found Headway, which they believe is the proper school for the intellectual level of their only child.

"DON'T call me a genius."

Dropout at age 4

Last year, the couple went to the INQUIRER for help after Adi, then aged four, dropped out of Grade I after learning everything his teacher could have taught him.

A test conducted by the University of the Philippines Department of Psychology confirmed that Adi was a gifted child.

Adi's mother, Marynol, however, believes that this time, her son will be able to cope in his new school "which caters to and understands the behavior of children like him."

She is also confident that Adi will not have any first-day jitters when he goes back to school next week.

"Unlike other kids who would cry and wouldn't let their parents leave them in school, Adi would tell us, 'Mommy, Daddy, why don't you just stay outside? I can manage.' He's very behaved, he would just sit and read the writings on the board," she narrated.

Ready to learn more

Adi started reading and speaking in English at age 2. He began writing a year later. Still, he told the INQUIRER that he hopes to learn "many new things in school."

While kids his age have yet to start counting from 1-10, Adi now knows the four mathematical operations.

"Before, he only knew addition and subtraction but he can now also solve multiplication and division problems," Marynol said.

Asked whether he had already prepared his school things, the boy who inherited his parents' good looks said: "Just a few things. Someone gave me a bag because I prayed."

Adrian Sr. said that aside from the school bag, most of his son's school needs, including books and school uniform, came from generous individuals.

Adi's tuition for this school year was sponsored by Asunscion Kilayko Ng, sister of famous concert pianist Leonor Kilayko.

"I prayed to God to give me a good school, now I have a good school, Headway," said Adi.

Adi's father, in fact, said he considers everything that has been happening to his son as a "miracle."

"Without the help of God, without prayers, we wouldn't be here. I believe this is all God's plan for Adi. I think it was really meant for him to study here in Manila," he said.

Since his son's story first came out in the INQUIRER, they have been deluged with hundreds of text messages and letters from people either sharing words of encouragement or expressing a desire to help the wonder boy, Adrian Sr. added.

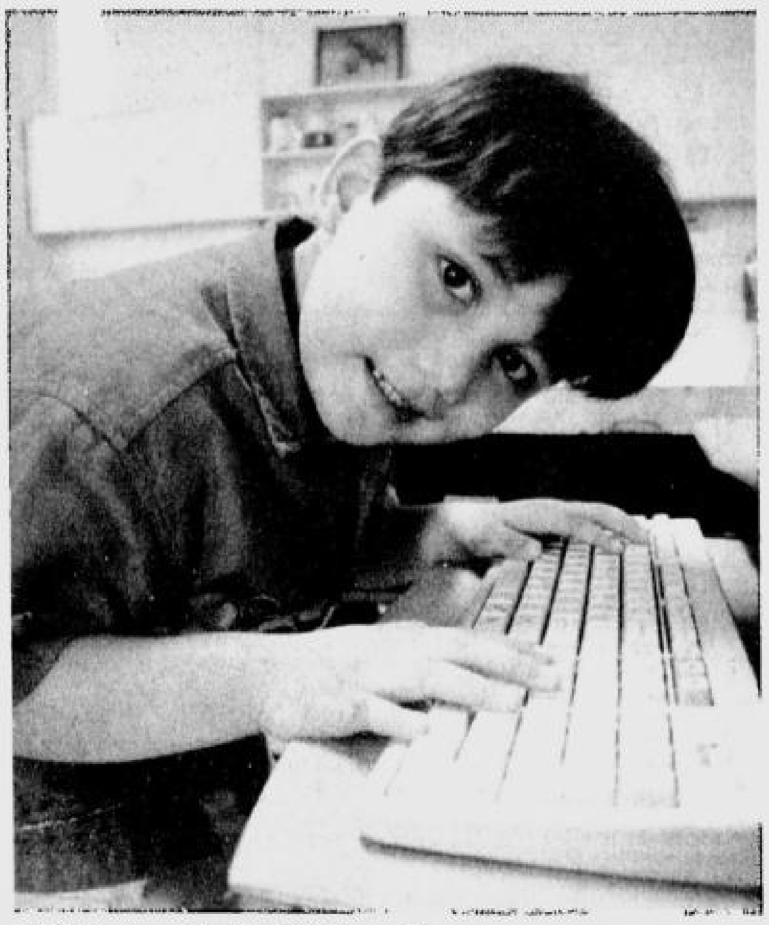
"Some were thanking us, saying his story was a welcome break for a nation mired in political controversy since it came out at the height of the 'Gloria-gate scandal,'" he said.

Generous people

Among those people who have helped Adi and his family are Emma Mendinueto, the owner of a two-story apartment in Teacher's Village where the family is staying, and some members of the Kamuning Elementary School Alumni Foundation led by Corazon Cano and Josie Hermoso.

There was also an old lady from Quezon province who, upon learning of Adi's fondness for musical instruments, gave him an organ.

"He is sensitive to sounds and always asks about them. He loves instruments but we can't buy him any," Marynol said.



GOOD looks and an IQ of 144 to match. PHOTOS BY AUGUST DELA CRUZ

The young boy spends most of his time reading books like the Bible or engaging adults in a conversation.

For a 5-year-old, he is aware of the things happening around him, including media killings.

"Their job is very risky," he told his dad over breakfast just last Saturday. "Someone will kill them, but if they're not doing anything wrong, they should not be worried. The media should be careful and truthful."

One time, he overheard his parents talking about Jesus having a wife in the controversial film "The Da Vinci Code."

Adi butted in, "I don't think so. How can Jesus preach if He has a family? How can He go to other places? Who will take care of His family?"

Indeed, Adi is the wonder child every parent dreams of. But he doesn't want to be called one as he stressed that somebody up there is more knowledgeable than he is.

"Don't call me a genius. This is just a gift from God. We don't know everything, only God knows everything," he said.

Home schooling catches on in RP

From page A25

cause it affords her more freedom and more time to help out with her grandmother's business.

"We're given modules and we're really required to finish the worksheets on time. Although I have a lot of free time, I still feel the pressure to meet deadlines," she added.

The same is true even for the celebrities in the batch, said De Guzman.

For celebrities, too

There are about a dozen or so artists undergoing home schooling. They are not all homegrown "Kapamilya" talents. Some of them are "Kapuso," or artists working for rival network GMA-7.

"The managers of some of the (teen) stars we handle have been very cooperative. Some of them would give us a copy of their ward's commitments and we would try to work around that," De Guzman said.

"We do fail students who do not comply with requirements," he said. "But we're not too focused on attendance. We understand that some of the students cannot be present all the time."

There's Andrew (not his real name), a bright 17-year-old who had to leave a private university because the school could not accommodate his long periods of absence.

The boy has a perfectly valid reason: He is undergoing treatment for leukemia.

Established in 1998, the DLC was originally intended as an educational institution for young actors and actresses who have no time to pursue their schooling because of work, she said.

It started with only nine students, all but one belonging to the ABS-CBN talent pool, Gonzales said. Since then, the DLC has expanded, seeking to promote itself as a distance learning center for all, regardless of age or stature. It has also been expanding its operation to accommodate regular students with special needs.

Gonzales said it was still too soon to offer college courses at the DLC, although the center was considering offering two-year special or vocational courses.

Famous student

Another famous "Kapamilya" who will be going back to school this year is Megastar Sharon Cuneta who turned 40 in January.

Her fans, however, should not to expect to see her on campus since she will be studying within the comfort of her home.

"I felt I had wasted so much time," Cuneta said on her one unfulfilled wish of finishing college. "My husband Kiko (Sen. Francis Pangilinan) has been encouraging me for the past 10 years because he saw how much I had enjoyed myself in Boston."

Cuneta was enrolled in Boston College for two terms in 1996.

"Then it hit me that my eldest KC is already graduating next year (with a degree in International Communications with a focus on corporations and organizations and a minor in theater arts). If only I had enrolled immediately after Boston, I could've had four degrees by now," she said.

LANI Mercado

AGA Muhlach

JANICE de Belen

Cuneta, however, had to take into consideration her mega-hectic schedule as working wife and mother to daughters Frankie and Miel.

Online learning

"The great thing about the two-year Associate in Arts program of the University of the Philippines Open University (OU) is that I'd be communicating with my instructors online. If I have questions, I can always e-mail them," she said.

Before going back to school, however, she had to overcome her initial fear of entrance examinations. "I had been away from school for a decade. Fortunately, a big part was essay writing and only one part was Math."

Cuneta placed second among the 50 students who took the entrance test.

More than anything else, she foresees that the UP OU will further hone her sense of self-discipline. "We can work on our assignments at home, but there are time limits. We're supposed to submit them on time. Periodically, we'll also be required to take exams at the UP Diliman campus," she said.

After finishing the required units, Cuneta hopes to take up Hotel and Restaurant Management.

She explained, "It's because ever since I was a child, I've always loved cooking, eating, entertaining. Anything to do with the kitchen and the home."

Home schooling in Pasig

In Pasig City, some high school students at the Rizal Experimental Station and Pilot School for Cottage Industries (RESPSCI) will probably just stay home today, the first day of school.

These students are enrolled in the home study program called "Balik Paaralan" which the public school in Barangay Maybunga has been offering in the last two decades.

"This was conceptualized to answer the needs of those who cannot go to school regularly, but are interested to learn," school principal Jose Gonzales Jr. told the INQUIRER.

Gonzales said the program was formulated by the national government to address the growing number of out-of-school youth in Pasig City.

RESPSCI has a regular high school program: students still go to school everyday and study at least nine subjects during the school year.

But for those with special needs, the home study program has been the solution.

Same curriculum

Students under the Balik Paaralan also take nine academic subjects and follow the same high school curriculum the Department of Education has prescribed for public high schools.

But they will only report once or twice a week—or even less frequently depending on their availability—to get assignments, projects and lessons from their teachers for a specific time frame or even for the entire grading period. There are four grading periods in a school year.

They could do their school tasks in the comfort of their homes, or at work, or during training. The next time they go back to school is to submit the requirements.

To gauge how much they have learned—and to know if they really studied at home and did the assignments themselves—they will be given quizzes and periodical exams the moment they report back to their classroom, program coordinator Roselle Urbina said.

There are four classrooms at the RESPSCI devoted to the home study program—one room per year level. Subject teachers and advisers still report to work everyday, ready for consultation should a student show up.

Trend-setter

RESPSCI, which also offers a regular high school program as well as vocational courses, takes pride in being the first to offer this alternative learning style, years before private institutions started offering home study programs.

Being a public school, the program is free of charge. Gonzales also guarantees quality learning although this will depend largely on the students themselves.

Still, Gonzales said the program had produced several students who passed the University of the Philippines College Admission Test, said to be one of the toughest entrance exams in the country.

But not everyone is qualified. Gonzales said those interested in enrolling should prove they cannot attend regular high schools because of their line of work, their poor health or because of security risks.

Take it from the program's first batch of graduates in 1985 which included actors Janice de Belen, Aga Muhlach and Lani Mercado.

They were followed by more show biz personalities, dancers and models that Gonzales, other teachers and residents near the school have piled up albums of souvenir photos.

There were also national athletes who enrolled in the program because they could not go to school regularly because of intense training.

Teen moms

But Gonzales was quick to add the home study program was also benefiting girls who had stopped schooling because of teenage pregnancy, those whose bodies had been weakened by chronic illnesses like asthma but whose passion for learning remained strong and those whose lives are under threat, like crime witnesses under police protection programs.

Of course, there is a vast difference with the discipline of going to school everyday. But there should be no comparison really, Gonzales said.

The alternative learning program is not out to displace the regular high school program.

But for those who would love to but cannot go to school every day, the home study program is a perfect way for knowledge to reach out.

METROBRIEFS

Strict security measures

CAINTA Mayor Mon Ilagan has ordered the municipal police force to intensify security measures not only for the school opening this week but to prevent a repeat of the bank robbery last Thursday. "We have to be vigilant because these are hard and dangerous times (when) crimes are committed even in broad daylight," Ilagan said in a statement. Ten men wearing police vests and armed with rifles robbed the Philippine National Bank Branch in Cainta, Rizal on Thursday morning, carting away P10 million. Police have already identified four of the suspects, believed to be members of the Ampang-Flores Robbery Group. Cainta Police chief Supt. Gilbert Cruz said they would file robbery charges against suspects Merlinas Flores, Bobet Enriquez, Elpidio Cuinto and Alvin Flores today. The suspects were identified by witnesses through police file photos.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Rookie cop killed

A ROOKIE policeman who sought shelter under a pedestrian overpass during a heavy downpour the other night was gunned down by two men in Quezon City. PO1 Noel Peñaflor of the Batasan Hills Police Station was riding his motorcycle on the westbound lane of Commonwealth Avenue at around 9 p.m. Saturday when the rain fell, police said. Not wanting to get wet, the 30-year-old policeman parked his vehicle under an overpass in front of Shell gasoline station, according to investigator PO2 Rodolfo Zulueta. As Peñaflor was waiting for the rain to subside, two men suddenly appeared from behind and shot him pointblank. The unidentified suspects then took the victim's personal belongings, Zulueta said. Witnesses reported the incident to the police, who rushed Peñaflor to the nearby Malvar General Hospital. However, the victim died along the way.

DJ Yap

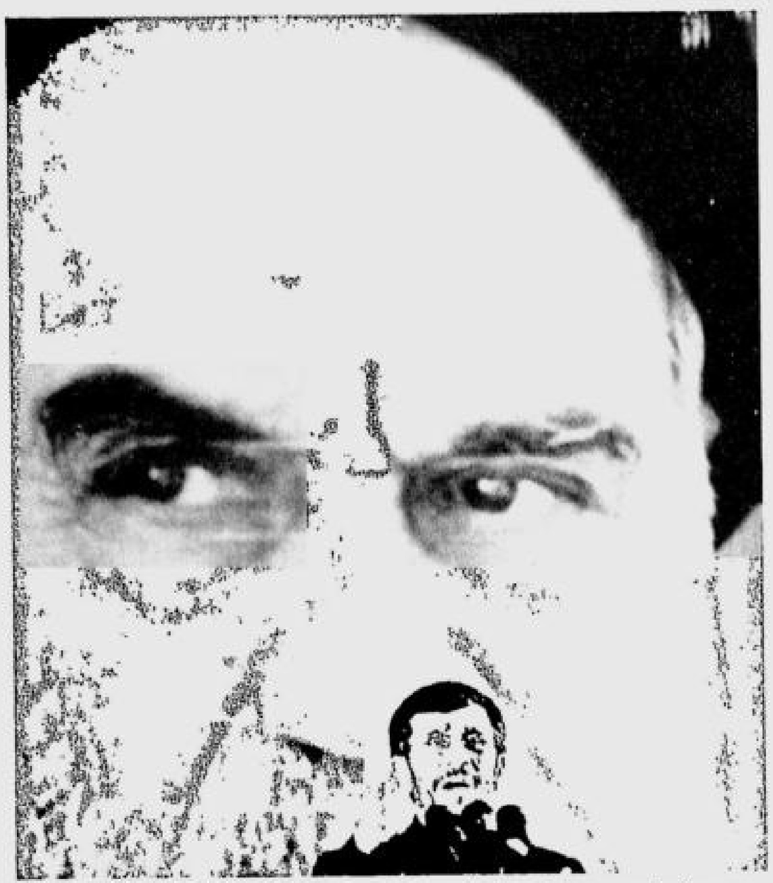
Number-coding back

A LITTLE reminder to drivers: today marks the resumption of the Unified Vehicle Volume Reduction Program (UVVRP) after a two-month suspension during the summer break. The UVVRP or number-coding, a traffic reduction program that decreases vehicular volume by around 20 percent from Monday to Friday, will again be implemented today in time for the resumption of classes in the metropolis. The scheme keeps vehicles off the road once a week based on the last digit of their license plate. The UVVRP was lifted on April 6 by virtue of a resolution passed by a majority vote of the Metro Manila Council, the policy-making body of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority. During the suspension, only Makati City continued to implement the scheme as officials said the school break had no effect on the traffic situation in the city.

Tarra V. Quismundo

Earth savers cited

MANILA Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales conferred the Father Neri Satur Award on six Earth savers yesterday at the Archbishop's Residence in Intramuros, Manila. Two were posthumous awardees: Buddy Lava (energy conservation) and Rene Lozada (medical waste treatment). The others were Sister Aida Velasquez (genetically modified organisms), Fr. Jose "Jet" Villarin (climate change mitigation), Fr. James Reuter (environmental education) and Dodong Amoin. Amoin is the president of a fisherman's organization in Cebu who is fighting to restore Department Administrative Order 17 which expands the fishing grounds reserved for small fisherfolk, thus increasing their income opportunities. The Father Neri Satur Award was set up by former Sen. Heherson Alvarez in memory of Father Satur who worked for the protection of forests against vested interests.



AHMADINEJAD during rites commemorating Iran's late revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (background photo) June 3. AFP

Iran to weigh incentives package

But Ahmadinejad vows not to give up nuclear technology

TEHRAN—PRESIDENT MAHMOUD Ahmadinejad said on Saturday Iran would consider incentives from six world powers to persuade it to abandon plans to make nuclear fuel, but insisted the crux of the package was still unacceptable.

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana will soon deliver the proposals agreed by the US, Russian, British, German, French and Chinese foreign ministers in Vienna on Thursday.

"We will not pass judgment on the proposals hastily," Ahmadinejad told a crowd at the tomb of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, spiritual father of the 1979 Islamic revolution, saying the package would receive due consideration.

"But using nuclear technology for production of nuclear fuel for peaceful purposes is part of our legal and certain rights and we will never negotiate on that with anybody," he added.

The West has demanded that Tehran give up uranium enrichment as proof that it is not developing nuclear weapons.

The incentives being offered by the six powers were still not known, but diplomats have been working on themes ranging from offering nuclear reactors to giving security guarantees.

No date has been announced for Solana to present the incentives to Iranian officials, but he plans to be in the Middle East on Sunday and Monday.

Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said on state television: "We believe if ... there's goodwill then there's a possibility that our ideas may complete the proposal and give them (Westerners) a way out of the situation they have created for themselves."

However, he added: "The main pillar of the talks is that they should be free from preconditions."

Iranian politicians habitually use the word "precondition" for demands that Iran end its fuel work. Mottaki and Ahmadinejad have said there is no question of this, insisting on a right to make fuel for power generation.

Ahmadinejad on Friday told UN Secretary General Kofi Annan that Iran was willing to negotiate on nuclear issues as long as talks had no "preconditions of threats," state media reported.

Washington says this must not be seen as a final rejection, and that Iran could be staking out a negotiating position.

Iran has a labyrinthine command structure and comments from the president and the foreign minister may not be the last word on political matters.

Iran's main authority is Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the Supreme National Security Council, headed by chief nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani, is directly charged with handling the nuclear dispute.

Analysts see the proposals from the world powers and a rare US offer to enter into direct talks with Iran as attempts to build a united diplomatic front for possible later action in the UN Security Council, which has the power to impose sanctions.

In a statement, the Vatican said on Saturday diplomacy was the only way to resolve the dispute over Iran's nuclear program.

"The Holy See is firmly convinced that even the present difficulties can and must be overcome through diplomatic contacts, using all the means diplomacy has at its disposal," it said. *Reuters*

Lunch talk shifted US stand

WASHINGTON—ON A TUESDAY afternoon two months ago, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice sat down to a small lunch in President Bush's private dining room behind the Oval Office and delivered grim news to her boss: Their coalition against Iran was at risk of falling apart.

A meeting she had attended in Berlin days earlier with European foreign ministers had been a disaster, she reported, according to participants in the discussion. Iran was neatly exploiting divisions among the Europeans and Russia, and speeding ahead with its enrichment of uranium. Bush grimaced, one aide said, "with a look that said, 'OK, team, what's the answer?'"

That question touched off a closely held two-month effort to reach a drastically different strategy, one articulated in a single sentence that Rice wrote in a private memo to Bush. It broached the idea that the United States end 27-year-old policy against negotiating directly with Iran.

Bush gradually grew more comfortable with offering talks to a country that he considers the No. 1 state sponsor of terrorism. His early misgivings about the path he was considering came in a flurry of phone calls to Rice and to Stephen J. Hadley, his national security adviser, that often began with questions like "What if the Iranians do this," gaming out loud a number of possible situations.

Bush left open the option of scuttling the entire idea until early Wednesday morning, three senior officials said.

He made the final decision only after telephone calls with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia and the chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, led him to conclude that if Tehran refused to suspend its enrichment of uranium, or later dragged its feet, they would support an escalating series of sanctions against Iran at the UN that could lead to a confrontation. *NYT*

AND THE WINNER IS ...
Mary Rose Luttrell, 4, looks up after competing in the cherry pie eating contest, June 3, at the Washington Cherry Festival in Washington, Ill. This was Luttrell's first attempt at the contest and she came away a winner in her age group. AP

Suicide bomber kills 28 in Basra

BAGHDAD, IRAQ—A SUICIDE CAR BOMBER blew himself up in a crowded market in oil-rich southern Basra, killing 28 people and wounding 62. In Baghdad, a Russian diplomat was killed and four diplomatic employees were kidnapped.

Around Iraq, at least 42 people were killed Saturday and dozens were wounded, and police discovered the remains of 12 people, including eight severed heads.

On Sunday, gunmen in a car opened fire on a minibus carrying telecommunications employees to work in an area near the Shiite slum of Sadr City, killing four and wounding two.

In Basra, Iraq's second-biggest city, the suicide car bomb exploded Saturday afternoon when many people were shopping, police Capt. Mushtaq Kadhim said. The blast left pools of blood around the market square and set several vehicles on fire.

It wasn't known who staged the attack, but Basra has seen growing violence and unrest, leading Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki last week to declare a monthlong state of emergency in the mainly Shiite city. *AP*

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Bolivia's Morales starts 'land revolution'

MORALES REUTERS

Leftist president to hand over a fifth of territory to poor farmers

SANTA CRUZ, BOLIVIA—BOLIVIA'S LEFTIST PRESIdent, Evo Morales, took a first step on Saturday toward handing over a fifth of the country's territory to poor farmers, a day after angry landowners vowed to form self-defense groups.

Morales chose the eastern city of Santa Cruz, the landowners' power base in Bolivia's agricultural heartland, to award 60 titles to 7.8 million acres (3.1 million hectares) of former government land to some of the poor peasants who support him.

"The historical enemies of the poor must accept this land revolution," Morales said at a ceremony in a square packed with thousands of indigenous people.

Morales, a coca farmer from a peasant background, unveiled the land reform program on May 1, the same day he nationalized the oil industry in South America's poorest country.

Although Morales' oil nationalization plans have worried foreign investors and stoked fears in Washington of continuing a leftward, nationalist trend begun by Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, criticism at home has not been widespread.

But his land reform plans have laid bare fault lines in a country where the Roman Catholic Church estimates a handful of families own 90 percent of all farmland, while 3 million indigenous peasant farmers share the rest.

Government pledges to redistribute only idle land and avoid massive seizures have failed to reassure landowners, and talks broke down between the government and landowners on Friday.

Jose Cespedes, a leader of a farm group in eastern Santa Cruz, told local television late on Friday that landowners would form committees to defend properties in the region, home to vast cattle ranches and soy plantations.

"If the law of the land doesn't defend us, we have the right to seek defense mechanisms," Cespedes said.

Cespedes did not say whether the groups would be armed, and government officials said earlier this week they would not tolerate "delinquent groups."

Bolivia has seen only isolated invasions of farms by landless peasants in recent years.

At first, the government said it planned to hand over up to 12 million acres (5 million hectares) of state property to indigenous groups. It then planned to identify idle private farmland for possible later distribution. *Reuters*

Fighting among ethnic gangs erupts anew in Dili

DILI—FRESH FIGHTING ERUPTED among rival ethnic gangs in East Timor's capital Dili Sunday, as church leaders pleaded with factions to heal the rifts that have threatened to push the country into all-out civil war.

The clashes occurred at the flash point Comoro Bridge area of the city, where police moved in and seized firearms and tear gas canisters from rioters.

The bridge is a vital link between the city and the airport, where thousands of refugees have crowded to escape the violence.

The bridge, which has been closed several times in the past week when gangs of youths turned it into a battleground, remained open Sunday despite the violence as trucks carrying water made their way to the refugee camps.

Malaysian and Australian troops from the 2,200-strong international force deployed to quell unrest in the capital conducted door-to-door searches in the area where youths had set fire to homes and were throwing rocks at each other.

The troops moved in with armored personnel carriers and helicopter support in an attempt to end the clashes, in which at least one man was detained after being found with a pistol.

And while the troop presence allowed fire fighters to work on extinguishing flames, gang members easily melted into the back alleys and continued looting and arson attacks minutes after the Australian-led forces had moved on.

Ambulance officers at the scene said there had been no injuries so far Sunday but the local hospital said six people were seriously hurt after being hit by rocks in the same area on Saturday and another nine people on Friday.

The latest violence came as church leaders pleaded in Sunday sermons for peace in the Timorese capital, where more than 20 people have been killed in recent violence.

"We cannot respond to violence with violence," father Aniceto Maia said.

"We have to respond to violence with love and truth," he told the congregation at the St. Antonio Motael church on Dili's waterfront, where refugees have camped out since last week seeking shelter. *AFP*

NEW ZEALAND troops perform a traditional Maori dance to welcome the Australian commander to their base in Dili June 4. AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

Montenegro declares independence

PODGORICA, Montenegro—Montenegro's parliament proclaimed independence for the tiny Balkan republic Saturday, forming a new European state and formally dissolving the last union of the former Yugoslavia. The independence declaration envisages Montenegro as a "multiethnic, multicultural and multireligious society ... based on the rule of law and market economy." The declaration also said Montenegro would immediately start procedures for admission to the United Nations and other international organizations. It was careful, however, to acknowledge its former partner Serbia by stating Montenegro's "special interest and full readiness" to "build good and friendly relations with Serbia." Serbia and Montenegro are linked culturally as well as historically, sharing the same Christian orthodox religion and language. *AP*

17 alleged terrorists arrested in Ontario

OTTAWA—Seventeen Canadian residents have been arrested and charged with plotting to destroy targets in Ontario with crude but powerful bombs, the Canadian authorities announced Saturday. At a news conference in the Toronto suburb of Mississauga, the police and intelligence officials said they had been monitoring the group for some time and moved in to make the arrests on Friday after its members took delivery of three tons of ammonium nitrate, a fertilizer that can be transformed into an explosive when combined with fuel oil. "It was their intent to use it for a terrorist attack," said a Royal Canadian Mounted Police assistant commissioner, Mike McDonell. "If I can put this in context for you, the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City that killed 168 people was completed with only one ton of ammonium nitrate." The 17 men—almost all in their teens or early 20s, with one 30-year-old and one 43-year-old—had planned to attack sites in the southern part of Ontario, the police said. They declined to identify specific targets, though they did dismiss reports in the news media that Toronto's subway system was on the list. *NYT*

Bush presses for gay-marriage ban

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush on Saturday urged the Senate to pass a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, in a congressional election-year pitch to conservatives whose enthusiasm for him has cooled. The Senate next week plans to debate a proposed amendment against gay marriage, though it is believed to have little chance of passing. "Marriage is the most enduring and important human institution, honored and encouraged in all cultures and by every religious faith," Bush said in his weekly radio address. "Ages of experience have taught us that the commitment of a husband and a wife to love and to serve one another promotes the welfare of children and the stability of society." Bush said a constitutional amendment was needed to keep "activist" judges from overturning efforts by some state legislatures to ban gay marriage. *Reuters*

Scientists: No big Indon quake again soon

YOGYAKARTA, Indonesia—There is little danger of another strong earthquake on Indonesia's Java island in the near future, scientists said Sunday, as jittery survivors endured more aftershocks. "There's not enough energy any more to trigger a big earthquake," Surono, a volcanologist in the energy ministry's geological disaster management center, told AFP. He described the aftershocks around the city of Yogyakarta since the powerful May 27 earthquake as "very small," at a magnitude of 2.0 to 3.0, adding: "There is no danger to the population." Some of the tens of thousands of people left homeless by the 6.3-magnitude quake which struck a week ago, killing more than 6,200 people, have been afraid to go back to their homes due to hundreds of minor aftershocks. *AFP*

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■ Mavs sink Suns, enter first NBA finals vs Heat /A32

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WORLD CHESS OLYMPIAD
Standings after Round 12

MEN: 34—Armenia; 31.5—China; 31—Russia; 30.5—France, Hungary; 30—Israel; 29.5—US, Netherlands, Bulgaria; 29—Ukraine, Denmark, Georgia, Spain, Poland, Norway; 28.5—Czech Rep., Uzbekistan, Germany, Cuba, Greece, Azerbaijan; 28—Moldova, Romania, England, Latvia, Canada; 27.5—Slovenia, Sweden, Serbia and Montenegro, Lithuania, Estonia; 27—India, Belarus, Iran, Brazil, Slovakia, **Philippines**, Switzerland, Bosnia Herzegovina, Italy B

WOMEN: 28—Ukraine; 26—Russia; 25—China; 23 United States; 22.5—Armenia; 22—Georgia, Hungary, India, France, Greece, Belarus, Poland, Germany; 21.5—Slovenia, Vietnam, Netherlands, **Philippines**, Czech Republic

RP women win, near record finish

By Roy Luarca

TURIN, ITALY—THE PHILIPPINE women team's time has come.

Defying the odds again, the Filipinas routed the Estonians, 2.5-0.5, in Round 12 on Saturday to bolster their drive for a best-ever finish in the Chess Olympiad.

In contrast, the men's team settled for a 2-2 draw with a Switzerland squad led by the phenomenal Viktor Korchnoi, who downed young Filipino Grandmaster Mark Paragua on board 1.

Now the Filipinos have to beat the Brazilians convincingly in the 13th and final round of the 37th Chess Olympiad at the Olympic Village here on Sunday if they hope to match their 19th place finish in the 2004 Calvia Olympiad.

The Filipinas, on the other hand, are assured of improving on their 48th place finish regardless of the outcome of their clash with the Slovenians.

Woman National Master Catherine Perena and Woman International Master Beverly Mendoza trounced WIM Monika Tsiganova and Woman Fide Master Valeria Gansvind on boards 1 and 3, respectively, to power the 60th-ranked Filipinos past 33rd-seeded Estonia.

Rookie Sherily Cua drew with WIM Viktoria Bashkite in 30 moves of a Caro-Kann on board 2 as the Filipinas raised their total to 21.5 points, good for a share of 14th place with Slovenia, Southeast Asian Games rival Vietnam, Cuba, Netherlands and the Czech Republic.

Women's team captain Cesar Caturla said he would be fielding the three against Slovenia.

The 20-year-old Perena, who has already earned an IM result with 6 points in nine rounds here, will tackle WGM Anna Muzychuk while the 19-year-old Cua, the team's highest scorer thus far with 6.5 points, will tangle with WGM Ana Srebrnic.

Mendoza clashes with WIM Jana Krivec.

A draw against Slovenia will enable the Filipinas to surpass their previous best finish of 20th in the 1988 Thessaloniki Olympiad, where the Filipinos also posted their loftiest finish of seventh.

The men's team could have also won.

New IM Oliver Dimakiling outplayed IM Richard Forster on board 4 while GM Eugene Torre drew with GM Yannick Pelletier on board 2.

However, Paragua, who was quality up (rook versus bishop) against two-time world title contender Korchnoi, wilted under time pressure.

GM Rogelio Antonio, on the other hand, was forced into a book draw by GM Florian Jenni.

Men's team captain Sammy Estimo, however, is hopeful that Paragua and Antonio will deliver against GM Giovanni Vescovi and GM Neto Jaime Sunye in round 13. Torre will be pitted against GM Junior Gilberto Milos while Dimakiling will tangle with IM Alexander Hilario Takeda Fier, needing a win to gain his first GM norm.

GALLEGO

Gallego Bangkok 9-ball champ

BANGKOK—RAMIL "Bebeng" Gallego of the Philippines came from behind to down Hong Kong's Au Chi-wai, 11-8, and capture the Bangkok leg of the San Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour yesterday at the Bang Na Hall.

The Japan-based Gallego got off to a poor start, allowing Au to take a 5-1 edge in the event organizaed by ESPN Star Sports.

But the cue artist from Bacolod City rallied to win the next five racks to seize the upperhand, 6-5. After splitting the next two racks, Gallego extended the gap to 8-6 after the Hong Kong player's dry break and foul on the 14th rack.

Gallego had a dry break himself on the 15th, but the 2004 Tokyo 9-Ball champion managed to keep Au at bay, 10-8.

The Filipino then closed out the match as the pro-Filipino crowd led by Philippine Ambassador Antonio Rodriguez roared in approval.

"I never lost hope even when I was behind," who was a last-minute replacement for 2004 World Pool titlist Alex Pagulayan.

Gallego, who ousted reigning World Pool champion Wu Chia-ching of Taiwan in the quarterfinals, earned $10,000 or about P530,000 for the win.

Earlier in the day, Gallego scored an 11-8 triumph over two-time World Pool champion Chao Fong-pang.

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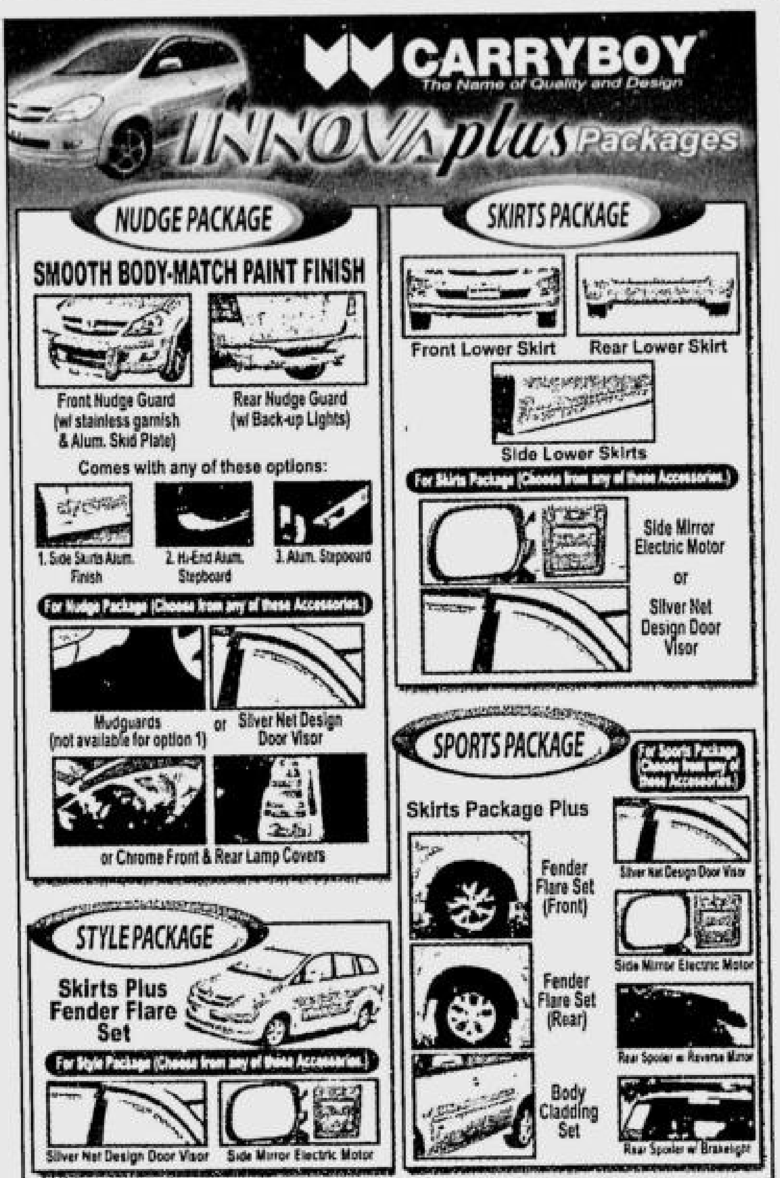

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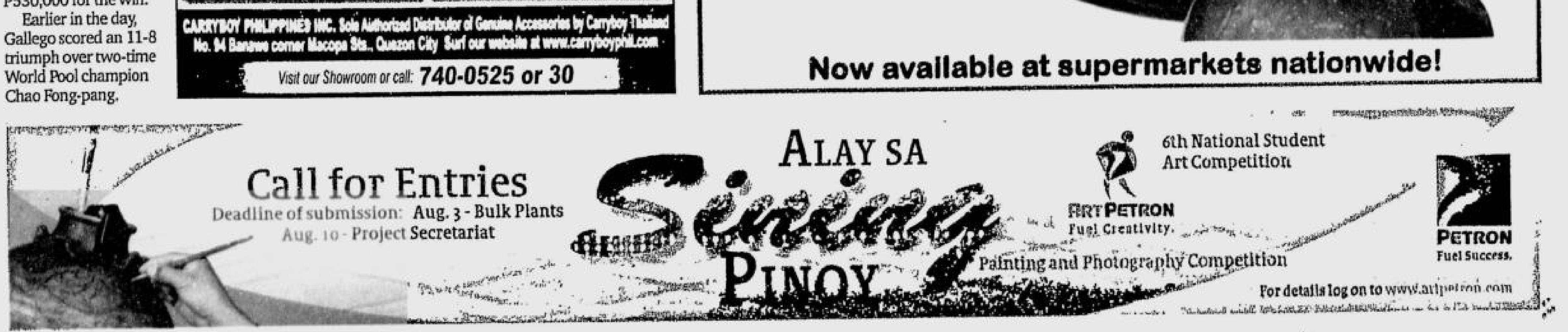

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Look who's out to kayo Manny Pacquiao

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

MANNY PACQUIAO IS BEING ROBBED right in his own kitchen, our boxing hero is being cheated in his home turf.

Pacquiao could lose by hometown decision, not against Oscar Larios, because that fight is not bound to last the full 12 rounds.

Pacquiao is being cheated by his own manager, Shelly Finkel.

That, in an unhappy nutshell, was how Rex Wakee Salud, who has produced at least three Filipino world champions—Dodie Boy Peñalosa, Malcolm Tuñacao and Gerry Peñalosa—has viewed Pacquiao's brewing trouble with his manager.

It's like this. Finkel's two-year managerial contract with Pacquiao is expiring on Jan. 31, 2007. (Finkel's contract stipulates that he takes 10 percent of Pacquiao's purses, with his management partners, lawyers Keith Davidson and Nick Kahn, splitting another five percent.)

But, in an obvious ploy to put Pacquiao off balance and get his hands tied for a contract renegotiation, Finkel has filed a suit against lawyer Franklin Gacal and Salud.

* * *

Salud is an adviser and trusted friend of Pacquiao; Gacal is the secretary of Pacquiao's promotional outfit.

Pacman's July 2 bout against Larios is being handled by Manny Pacquiao Promotions, Inc.

No need for a boxing thesaurus here. Finkel has, in the process, virtually sued Pacquiao himself.

Finkel, as detailed by the Star's Joaquin Henson, has accused Gacal and Salud of fraud and contract interference in negotiating Pacquiao's fight against Larios with ABS-CBN. The giant network gave Pacquiao's promotional company $4 million to stage the July 2 card. Pacquiao is to get $1 million of the total budget as his rightful purse. But Finkel, entitled to a percentage of Pacquiao's purse, wanted a share from the $4 million total budget, not from $1 million. Finkel and associates are demanding 25 percent of the $4 million budget.

* * *

Here's the catch. Finkel, says lawyer Gacal, is agreeable to withdrawing the suit if he gets what he has been demanding out of the Larios fight.

Explained Gacal: "If he shares in $3 million, he's agreeable to no extension; if he shares in $2.5 million, he wants an extension of one fight; if he shares in $2 million, he wants an extension of two fights; if he shares in $1.5 million, he wants an extension of three fights. If he shares in $1 million, his rightful cut, he's going to court."

Wow! That's a lot of sleazy math which should not be boggling Pacquiao's music system at this point.

But, for a deeper appraisal of the mess, let's hear from a dedicated Pacquiao backer, Gary Gittelsohn, manager of world light flyweight champ Brian Viloria: "According to the account in the Manila Daily Bulletin, Finkel and Kahn have alleged that Gacal and Salud coerced Manny into signing a disadvantageous contract with ABS-CBN in connection with the July 2nd Larios fight. This, from the same people who installed their friend Gary Shaw as Manny's promoter for the Pacquiao-Morales II and paid him $250,000 out of Manny's end of the purse—a sweetheart deal that stunk to high heaven. Where's the fiduciary accountability? From my vantage point, the only thing disadvantageous in that ABS-CBN deal is that, seemingly, Finkel and Kahn are having a difficult time taking control of the monies. Thus, the ABS-CBN deal appears to be a lucrative one for Manny and his promotional company, but not for Finkel and Kahn. And, for a real laugh, I'd love to hear Finkel's and Kahn's legal theories as to what duty Manny owes them for a contract extension. Instead of Larios, Manny should just take these two con artists in the ring and rearrange their features."

* * *

Thank you, sir.

That statement was emailed by Gittlesohn to boxing expert Hermie Rivera, no stranger to this kind of dirty infighting.

Meanwhile, trainer Freddie Roach, mainly responsible for bringing in Finkel into Team Pacquiao, has also raised hell. He said the bespectacled, bald-headed manager, who had handled the likes of Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield, has no business distracting Pacquiao at the height of training.

Unless Finkel wanted to destroy the Filipino national treasure.

MARLOU
put up a sh
Washingto

STANDINGS	W	L
La Salle	8	0
Adamson	5	2
Far Eastern	5	3
S. Sebastian	4	4
Lyceum	4	4

GAMES TODAY
(*Blue Eagle Gym*)
3 p.m.—San Sebastian vs Lyceum
5 p.m.—Far Eastern U vs Adamson

V-League: Adamson faces FEU in key tiff

ADAMSON SEEKS REvenge against Far Eastern University while San Sebastian and Lyceum clash for a first win in the semifinal round of the Shakey's V-League at the Blue Eagle Gym today.

The Lady Falcons, coming off a two-week break, are slightly favored to retain their second-place standing behind Cherry Rose Macatangay, the tourney's leading scorer.

Adamson finished the eliminations with a 5-2 record behind La Salle, which stretched its unbeaten record to eighth wins with a 21-25, 23-25, 25-9, 25-21, 15-5 beating of San Sebastian Saturday.

The Lady Falcons also hope to avenge their eliminations loss to the Lady Tamaraws, who are going into the game fresh off a victory over Lyceum.

"They're a hardworking team, that's why they beat us in our first meeting," said Adamson coach Dulce Pante.

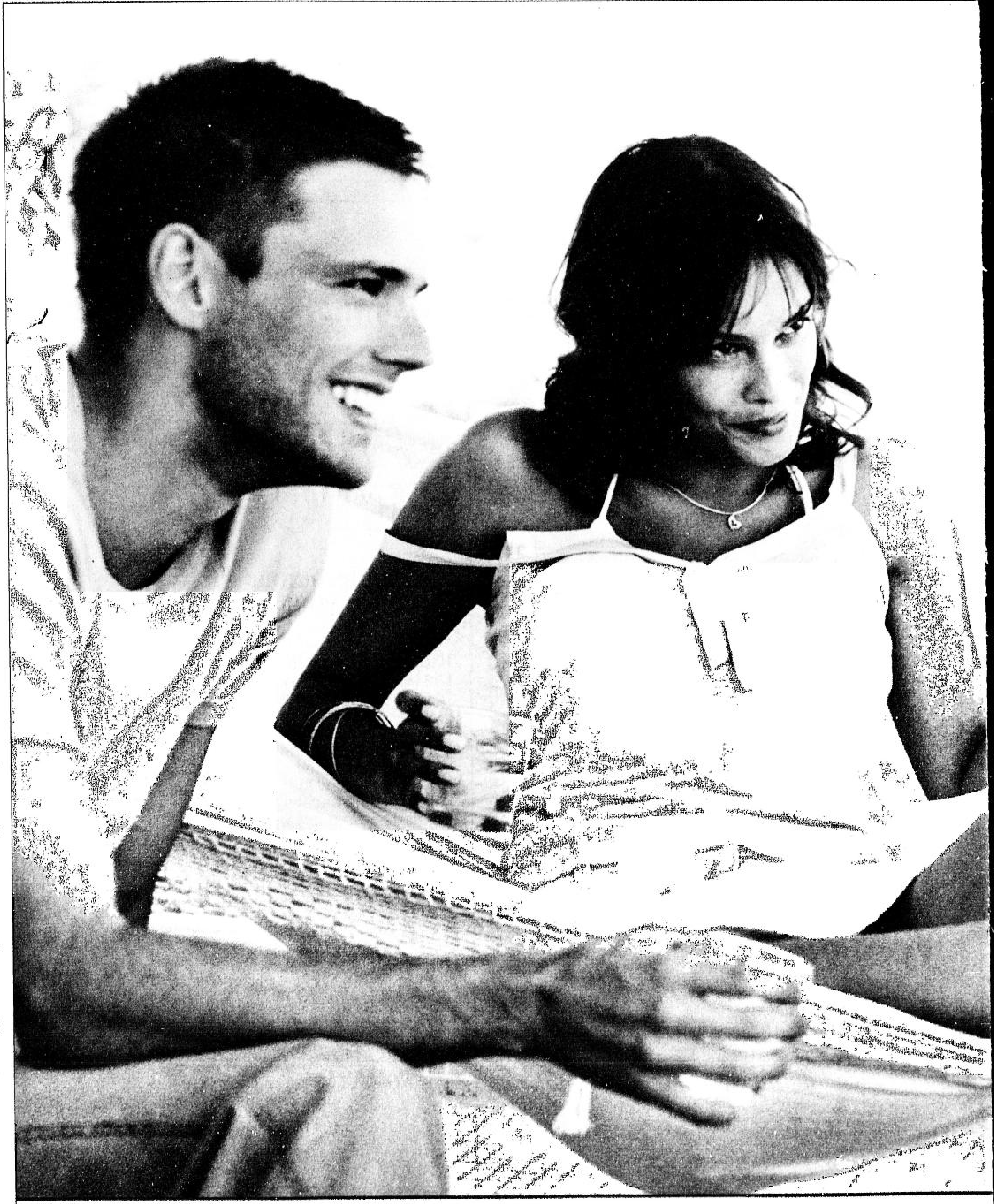
Marc Anthony Reyes

San Juan Int'l starts today

AN IMPRESSIVE CAST of cockers and breeders plunge into action today in the SJC 9-Cock International Derby at the San Juan Coliseum with Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as sponsor. The first of more than 100 fights sizzles at 2 p.m. Heading the elite cast are Gene Batiea of Mississippi who will team up with Jun Topacio and US Sweater man Bruce Barnette. For inquiries, call 725-5369, or 725-6563 or 0917-8041691 and look for Ronnie.

PCAP derby under way

THE BATTLE FOR THE Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) Cocker of the Year title heats up today at the Makati Coliseum with the staging of a 5-cock derby sponsored by B-Meg Derby Ace and with 70 fights on tap. The Cocker of the Year winners will get P2 million. The Super Pacman entry of boxing icon Manny Pacquiao and Amor Salvanera led the field with 31.5 points, half a point up on the Ika Mae entry of Butchoy Olano.



Government Warning: Cigarette s

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quino (center) of Sta. Lucia finds a way to t against Talk 'N Text's Anthony (left) and Asi Taulava.

Realtors overpower Pals in farewell game

By June Navarro

STA. LUCIA REALTY MADE SURE IT wouldn't have another disastrous farewell game of the season.

Leaning on the heroics of Dennis Espino and Kenneth Duremdes, the Realtors bowed out of the PBA Philippine Cup with a 113-101 whipping of the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals last night at the Araneta Coliseum.

Espino and Duremdes fired 12 points each in the third period as the Realtors built twin-digit leads they sustained the rest of the way after trailing 46-53 at the half.

"We were really frustrated with the loss against Ginebra (last Friday)," said Sta. Lucia Realty coach Alfrancis Chua. "At least we finished on a good note and (can now) start thinking of the draft."

The Realtors have nine players with expiring contracts—key players Nelbert Omolon, Jimwell Torion and Chester Tolomia, among them, while the rest are all marginal players.

"There will be changes in the lineup but not that much," said Chua, whose Realtors will engage the Phone Pals in a lottery to determine which team gets the top overall pick next season. "We could probably get another big man as backup and a slasher."

The Phone Pals, however, have already given up their first-round pick to Air21 when Talk 'N Text acquired Yancy De Ocampo during the 2003 season. The lottery is set in Game 2 of the best-of-seven Finals.

The 2006 PBA rookie draft is tentatively scheduled on Aug. 20.

GAMES WEDNESDAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
(Start of best-of-five quarterfinals)
4:40 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Alaska
7:35 p.m.—Red Bull vs Brgy Ginebra/Air21

The scores:

STA. LUCIA 113—Duremdes 24, Espino 19, Aquino 13, Omolon 12, Cabagnot 11, Calimag 10, Mendoza 10, Gonzales 5, Calli 4, Cuan 2, Tolomia 2, Santos 1.

TALK 'N TEXT 101—Taulava 24, Carey 22, Alapag 20, Washington 13, Ritualo 10, Allado 4, Pablo 4, Juinio 2, Fran 2.

Quarters: 27-30, 46-53, 84-69, 113-101

PBC INT'L OPEN

Suarez, Rey pace Class O doubles by 9

FORMER WORLD CUP CHAMPION CJ SUAREZ and Southeast Asian Games titlist Botchok Rey flashed hot forms Saturday night as RP Team 1 stamped its class in men's Class O doubles of the 35th PBC-Boysen International Open tenpin bowling championships.

Suarez totalled 494 (258-236) pinfalls, while Rey turned in 460 (216-244) as they took top spot with 954, just nine ahead of Markwin Tee and Biboy Rivera of RP Team 2 who had 945.

Vener Reasonda and Raoul Miranda combined for 870 as the Manila Tenpin Bowling Association pair tallied 870 to place third.

It was an all-National Team affair in the Class O ladies as the tandem of Liza Clutario, current SEAG masters champ, and Asiad titlist Cecilia Yap combined for an 866 to take the lead.

Apple Posadas and Elaine Florencio of RP Team 2, grabbed second place with 840, even as RP Team 3 of Trixie de Luna and Sheena Go combined for a 792 for third place in the tourney being held at the Green Valley Bowling Center in Pasig City.

Benny Almazar (440) and Steve Robles (382) of PBA paced the Class A competitions with an 822 total. PBAP-Bowlmart's Gabriel Go and J. Em Ang, who scored 806, and Ronnie Tolentino and Edward Coo of ATBA, who produced 803, took second and third, respectively.

The PBAP's Lara Posadas and Angeli Lao lorded it over in the ladies' side with 800, beating WB's Eve Lombos and Rory Villena (770) and the pair of Girlie Solis and former World Cup champ Bong Coo (705).

MBA-Timberpro's Ryan Romero (355) and Allan Villanueva (514) rolled 869 to lead men's Class B, pacing PBA's Philip Rillorta and John Tiongson who totalled 809.

Marc Anthony Reyes

STANDINGS	W	L
North Division		
Harbour	6	4
Parañaque	5	4
Taguig	5	5
Tagaytay	4	5
Pangasinan	2	8
Sta.Rosa	0	10
South Division		
Ozamiz	8	2
Iligan	7	3
Pagadian	7	3
N. Cotabato	6	4
Valencia	4	5
Iloilo	3	4

Pagadian scuttles Taguig

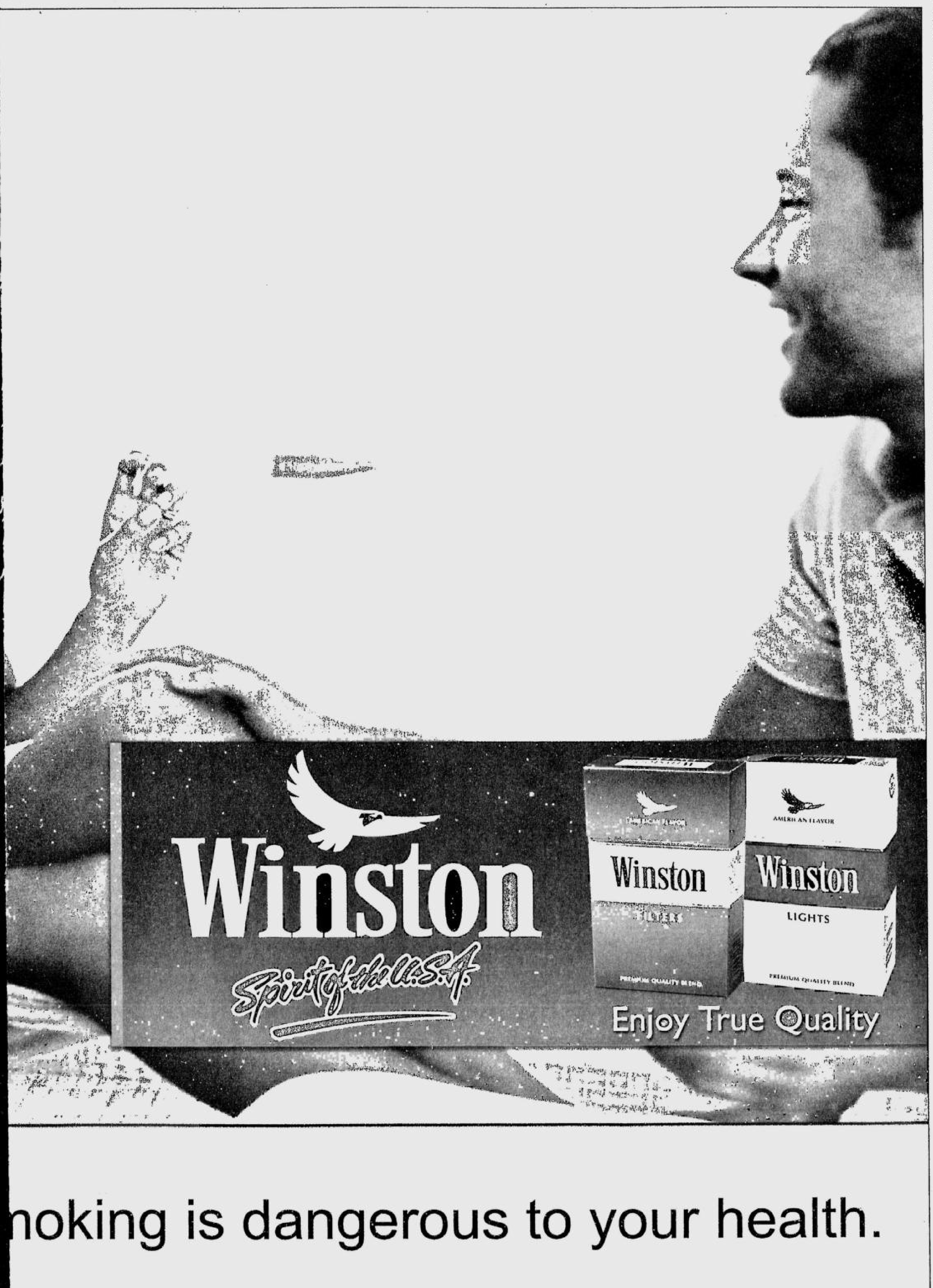
PAGADIAN CITY—The Pagadian Explorers maintained their fiery form at home by beating the Forward Taguig cagers, 77-69, Saturday in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship at the city gym here.

Ping Daja exploited the absence of Taguig's big men to set a league-record 23 rebounds, surpassing the 22 held by reigning MVP Christian Nicdao.

Daja also finished with 18 points, three blocks and a steal.

Ex-pros Bong Marata and Peter Naron ably backed Daja with 20 and 12 points, respectively. Marata also had seven assists, four rebounds and two steals.

With their seventh win in 10 games, the Explorers of Mayor Sammy Co tied idle Iligan for second place in the Southern division.



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Mavs enter finals

Dallas makes Suns set in Phoenix

PHOENIX—DIRK NOWitzki gained sweet revenge for the Dallas Mavericks as he guided them past the Phoenix Suns, 102-93, Saturday to reach the National Basketball Association Finals for the first time.

The big German scored 24 points and 10 rebounds and Josh Howard added 20 points and had 15 rebounds for the Mavericks, who win the best-of-seven Western Conference series 4-2 to advance to the Finals for the first time in their 26-year franchise history.

Dallas will host Game One of the Finals Thursday night against the Miami Heat.

Nowitzki, coming off a career-high 50 points in Game Five in Dallas Thursday night, had 16 of his 24 points in the second half to help Dallas win its third straight series on the road.

"We just stuck with it," Nowitzki told reporters moments after the win.

"We've been a good road team all season long, we believed in each other. We went through some ups and downs this season, but the playoffs is all about showing heart and playing together and believing in a system."

It was sweet revenge for Nowitzki and the Mavs, who were knocked out of the playoffs by the Suns last year on their home court.

"Last year they knocked us out in six. We returned the favor and won on their home court like they did last year."

The Mavericks trailed by as many as 18 points in the second quarter and by 15 in the third quarter, but rallied behind Nowitzki to finally oust the Suns, who played two seven game series against the Los Angeles Lakers and Clippers before finally running out of gas. Reuters

DALLAS guard Jerry Stackhouse slams the ball in the second half. REUTERS

Nadal survives gutsy French foe, banana

PARIS—RAFAEL NADAL WAS TERRIFIED.

Not because he was in the throes of a possible upset Saturday, a nearly 5-hour match against an unheralded Frenchman playing brilliantly and backed by 15,000 rowdy countrymen in the stands. Nope, much scarier than that: The defending French Open champion thought he was choking on a piece of banana, right there on center court. In the middle of a game. When he was serving for the third set.

So Nadal put the ball in his pocket, walked over to sit in his changeover chair, and told the chair umpire he needed help. It was the oddest of pauses, the sort of thing you might expect to see in a public park, not at a Grand Slam tournament.

In any event, Nadal managed to clear his throat and get past a tough test from the 29th-seeded Paul-Henri Mathieu, outlasting him, 5-7, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4, to reach the fourth round and improve to 10-0 at Roland Garros.

"I was getting pretty nervous and a little frightened. It wasn't that I couldn't breathe, but I felt something strange," said Nadal, who turned 20 on Saturday. "So I said, 'Wow, I'm going to stop. I'm going to stop so that nothing happens, and we don't have a tragedy here.' And if it looked bad, I didn't care."

The interruption only added to the theatrical nature of the match, which included an epic first set that lasted 1 hour, 33 minutes, a game in which Mathieu saved nine break points, and rally after rally of more than 20 strokes, with both players making remarkable retrievals.

Still, Nadal stretched his record winning streak on clay to 56 matches, and if that's to become 57, he'll have to beat two-time major champion Lleyton Hewitt for the first time. They meet in the fourth round Monday, because Hewitt beat No. 22 Dominik Hrbaty, 7-6 (5), 6-2, 6-2.

"He's an extremely tough player right at the moment, especially on this surface," said Hewitt, who's 3-0 against Nadal, all on hard courts.

Players often eat bananas to help avoid cramping during lengthy matches, and Nadal seemed to be chomping on them at every changeover, including at 5-4 in the third set. One bite slipped into his throat during the first point of that game. He played one more point, then stopped. Sitting, he shook a banana peel, and pointed to his neck, anxiety in his eyes. A trainer came out and visited him, then a doctor, during the 3-minute delay. Eventually OK, he finished off the game in short order.

"He's very, very good on clay, but I don't think it's impossible to beat him," said Mathieu. "It's difficult, but it's not impossible."

Meanwhile, Shenay Perry lost to No. 32 Gisela Dulko 6-1, 6-1, leaving Venus Williams as the only American woman still around in the tournament. *AP*

NADAL: Near choke—on a banana. REUTERS

Mamaya wastes little time taking Binay Cup

By Musong R. Castillo

FAR THIRD CHOICE MAMAYA JUMPED OUT of the gates hard under Fernando Raquel and ran a blistering pace yesterday to win the fifth running of the Jejomar Binay Cup in wire-to-wire style over a courageous Last Hazm.

The four-year-old bay filly turned in an eye-popping pace in the middle two quarters that no one in the six-horse field could match before pouring it all out in the run for home for a four-length victory on a hard track at the Sta. Ana Park in Makati City.

In winning the P300,000 top prize, the speedster Mamaya clocked an impressive 1 minute and 32 seconds over 1,500 meters with quarters of 19, 22.5, 24, 26.5.

"My mount really thrives when she's setting the pace," Raquel told the INQUIRER in Filipino.

"And it was good that she was out there in front alone."

Last Hazm, steered by Jeffril T. Zarate, came within two nail-biting lengths of Mamaya before the eventual victor pulled away at the final turn to win with plenty to spare.

Tinder, the betting favorite ridden by Joe Noel Camu, jumped out fourth and finished in the same position behind Fairy Queen.

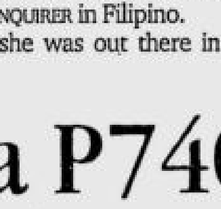
Leave No Doubt finished fifth while Vickyval brought up the rear.

Meanwhile, Hard To Find joined the list of nominated entries for the JV Ongpin Cup, the second leg of the 2006 Triple Crown series set June 18 over 1,800 meters also at Sta. Ana.

Don Exequiel, a colt in the dominant Esguerra stable, will shoot for the second jewel against basically the same field he mastered at the San Lazaro Leisure Park last month.

Special Edition, the second placer to Don Exequiel, Jet Sutter, Tigres in Action, Batong Silyar and Million Dollar, the first leg favorite have also been nominated to dispute the cup.

Miñoza P740,000 richer


MIÑOZA

FILIPINO ACE FRANKIE Miñoza registered his best finish so far in the young season of the Japan Tour by sharing 15th place in the JCB Classic Sendai at the Ometazao Kokusai Golf Club in Miyagi, Japan.

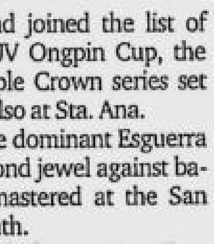
Miñoza, shuttling between the Asian Tour and the Japan Tour this year, had a final round of even-par 71, after earlier rounds of 71, 70 and 70, that left him in a four-way tie at 282, 16 strokes off winner Hideto Tanihara.

Miñoza pocketed 1,570,000 yen, or about P740,000. He jumped 20 rungs in the money list to 70th after five events.

Over at the Shoprite LPGA Classic at the Seaview Resort and Spa course in New Jersey, the Philippines' Jennifer Rosales likewise stayed on course for a decent windup after registering her second straight one-under 71 for a share of 38th spot.

Rosales' 140 total was eight shots behind leader Ai Miyazato of Japan.

CLEAN LIVING



Manolo R. Iñigo

DUE to space constraints, Manolo Iñigo's column will see print tomorrow.—Ed

UE belles top Shakey's tourney of champs

UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST TOPPED THE SHAKEY'S TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS YESTERday by stopping University of Southern Philippines, 27-25, 25-19, 25-20, at the Ateneo Blue Eagle gym. The title was the second in a week's span for the team after also bagging the crown in the Shakey's Girls Volleyball Invitational League. UE is also the reigning champion in the UAAP. The loss was a heartbreaking one for USP, which late into the first set lost star spiker Jane Marlith Garidos to knee injury. Yumang was adjudged as the Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the meet, the same award she received during the Shakey's GVIL. Lady Warriors' mentor Jesse Reyes ran away with the best coach award. Special awardees of the event co-sponsored by Dunkin Donuts, Mikasa and Tobys were Hope Christian's Carmela Garbin (Best Server), Jamenea Ferrer (Best Libero) and Joanna Ching (Best Universal Player), San Agustin's Mykee Villar (Best Libero), Quezon City High's Mikaela Morada (Best Attacker) and UE's Cristel Rosale (Best Blocker). In the girls tournament supported by Asics and Air Philippines, other awardees were UE's Giza Yumang (Best Blocker), Jamie Pereabras (Best Setter) and Mary Ann Balmaceda (Best Libero), Passi Nat'l High-Iloilo's Cheryl Palomar (Best Server), Monserrat-Bacolod's Angelyn Pudadera (Best Attacker) and USP-Cebu's Lovina Pepito (Best Universal Player).

Williams, Devance lead MVP race

GAMES THURSDAY *(Olivarez Sports Center)*
2 p.m.—Rain or Shine
vs Montana (Knockout for 3rd)
4 p.m.—Toyota Otis
vs Harbour Centre (Game 1-Finals)

By Jasmine W. Payo

WHILE TWO TEAMS PROVED TO BE the revelations of the PBL Unity Cup, there were no surprises when Joe Devance and Kelly Williams emerged frontrunners in the race for the MVP plum.

Based on statistics, Williams of Magnolia Ice Cream has a slight lead with averages of 17.4 points and 12.7 rebounds per game.

Devance of Toyota Otis is second-best after norming 15.6 points, 9.1 rebounds and 1.4 blocks.

But while Williams' efforts failed to boost Magnolia past the quarterfinals, Devance will continue to be the focal point when Toyota Otis guns for its first title versus Harbour Centre—also a finals first-timer—starting Thursday.

The Sparks and the Portmasters will clash at 4 p.m. in the opener of their best-of-five series at the Olivarez Sports Center in Parañaque.

Other contenders for the top individual award include last conference's MVP Jojo Tangkay of Rain or Shine (15.2 ppg, 7.1 rpg, 1.7 spg), Magnolia's Arwind Santos (13.1 ppg, 10.2 rpg, 2.1 bpg) and Granny Goose's JR Quinahan (11.6 ppg, 6.4 rpg, 1.4 bpg).

KICKOFF: The 2006 Adidas futsal championship opens at the F-MAC Gym in La Salle Green Hills with a ceremonial kickoff led by (from left): Adidas sports marketing manager Goody Custodio, Adidas chief finance officer Joel Orense, National Capital Region Football Association president Jose Vito Borromeo and LSGH athletic director Nongnong Calanog.

M. Soccer captures futsal title

MANILA SOCCER ACADEMY SUBdued a determined but undermanned Ramrod side to fashion a 1-0 win last Saturday to bag the First MPLFA-AAVA Premier Football League championship at the Cuenca field in Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

Richard Leyble finally scored the marginal goal in the 81st minute from near the left goal post after a tap-out by Ramrod goalie Simon Wilson, who earlier foiled the shot of Rodney Leyble following a scramble.

Ramrod tried in vain to equalize but couldn't make any headway, allowing the MSA booters to bag the maiden title of the event organized by the Muntinlupa Las Piñas Parañaque Football Association and sponsored by Ford Alaban, Siemens and Skycablee Premiere.

Alabang Nite Club whipped Muntinlupa Football Club, 4-2, to salvage third place in the soccerfest also backed by Standard Charted, Sphere gym, Casa Belrina Travel Consultants, East West Bank and Molten, the official ball.

Joaquin Preysler, Philippine Football Federation futsal committee chair, MPLFA president Cathy Rivilla and MPLFA general secretary Chito Manuel awarded the trophies and medals in the closing rites.

MSA midfielder Roberto Caboral bagged the Most Valuable Player Award, Fernandez was adjudged as best midfielder, teammate Patrick Ozaeta best defender, while MSA's Jeffrey Lobaton and Richard Leyble, who had eight goals each, best strikers. Ayala Nite Club's Ted Guinto took best goalie honors.

Milo marathon stages Cavite leg on June 26

AFTER A 15-WEEK SUMMER BREAK, the 30th National Milo Marathon returns on June 26 for an elimination race in Cavite City.

The 30-leg foot race opened in Kidapawan City on Jan. 29 and has already made stops in the cities of Tagbilaran, Batangas, Dumaguete, Puerto Princesa and Lucena.

On June 25, the country's biggest and longest-running marathon goes to Cavite City where more than 5,000 runners are expected to participate. Organizing the Cavite leg is Vice Mayor Dino Chua, whose office on the second floor of the Cavite City Hall at the Samonte Park is also the registration center.

The top three finishers in the centerpiece 21K races in the men's and women's divisions will join the early qualifiers to the Grand National Finals on Dec. 10 in Metro Manila.

The event which is expected to draw the most number of participants in Cavite is the 5K fun run where the serious competitors as well as the health buffs and fun runners will join.

An age-group 3K race will also be held in the 6-9 and 10-12 years old categories.

This annual marathon is held in partnership with Bayview Park Hotel-Manila, adidas, Cebu Pacific, Department of Tourism and Powerbar.

Aside from elegant trophies and medals, a total of P160,000 in cash prizes is also at stake for the top 10 finishers in each race category.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

sms feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) **or email us at** pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Entertainment vs stories of national interest

By Nini Valera

WHERE DOES A NETWORK DRAW the line that can "objectively and adequately qualify which events are solely entertainment in nature and which are matters of national interest?"

GMA 7 poses the question to Maria Ressa, ABS-CBN senior vice president and head of News and Current Affairs, who earlier said that exclusive coverage was common practice in entertainment—for instance, celebrity weddings—but not in coverage of news events.

Ressa made the statement after GMA 7 wrote ABS-CBN a cease-and-desist letter on the latter's coverage of climber Romeo Garduce's Mt. Everest bid.

The letter informed ABS-CBN that GMA 7 had the exclusive right to cover Garduce's climb. Ressa said coverage of events of national interest, such as the Everest story, should not be "exclusive" to a single news organization.

In a statement sent to INQUIRER Entertainment on Friday night, GMA 7 head of corporate communication Butch Raquel said that in the Philippines, and even in other countries like the US, "a big event in the life of a famous celebrity is almost always of great interest to the public, thus naturally becoming a news event."

The statement continued: "To claim that an event is solely entertainment in nature just because the personalities concerned are well-known entertainment celebrities, is to also say that there lies the line

ENTERTAINMENT/ A2-4

PADILLA: Mother Lily says she's "it."

Zsazsa, Zsazsa!

Comic-book movie, an MMFF entry, has a new director and star

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

A NEW DIRECTOR IS NOW ATTACHED TO the movie version of Carlo Vergara's comic book, "Ang Kagilagilalas na Pakikipagsapalaran ni Zsazsa Zaturnnah."

"Zsazsa," which is produced by Regal Entertainment, is among the approved 10 entries in this year's Metro Manila Film Festival.

MMFF Best Director Joel Lamangan ("Mano Po") takes over the director's chair, vacated by another MMFF Best Director Mark Meily ("Crying Ladies").

This development was confirmed by Meily, Lamangan and Regal producer Lily Monteverde.

"Mark and Mother Lily decided on this because they couldn't agree on one aspect of the production," Lamangan said.

The switch was made two weeks ago.

Meily explained: "I understand Mother Lily's position. For a Filipino film to break even nowadays, it needs to recover three times its production cost. If your budget is P20 million for example, a film needs to earn at least P60 million. My requirement was a little higher than what she had in mind."

Effects of crisis

Specifically, Meily had envisioned the flashback scenes as animated sequences, à la "Kill Bill Vol. 1." But, he said, that would cost an additional P5 million, "which meant the film would need to make an extra P15 million."

Meily explained that "these are concrete effects of the crisis in the movie industry. Producers are still saddled with high taxes. Producers cannot avail of rebates (on amusement taxes from the Cinema Evaluation Board) during the MMFF's two-week run."

"There is no issue; no problem," Lamangan insisted. "I've talked to Mark and I understood his reasons for not pushing through with the project. I suppose he also understands why I accepted it. I cannot say no to Mother Lily."

"We studied the matter very carefully," Monteverde told INQUIRER Entertainment in a phone interview last Saturday. "We didn't want to hurt the people who'd be affected by the changes."

Ric Camaligan, a member of the MMFF selection and screening committee, pointed out that "changing the director is not a violation of the film fest's rules… especially since the new director of 'Zsazsa' is also an award-winning filmmaker."

Third choice

"The producer only needs to formally inform the committee, which will approve the change. But I don't see any problem about that," opined Wilson Tieng, another committee member.

Camaligan asserted that the committee would be more concerned if the cast had been changed. "Should there be a change in the lead stars, the replacements should be of equal stature and bankability."

Lamangan divulged that "everything is still up in the air, when it comes to the cast."

"There is a chance that the cast will be changed," Monteverde concurred. "Casting is always dependent on the director's recommendations. As of now, Zsazsa Padilla might get the role back."

Originally, Kris Aquino was cast as "Zsazsa." After Aquino proved unavailable,

ZSAZSA/ A2-4

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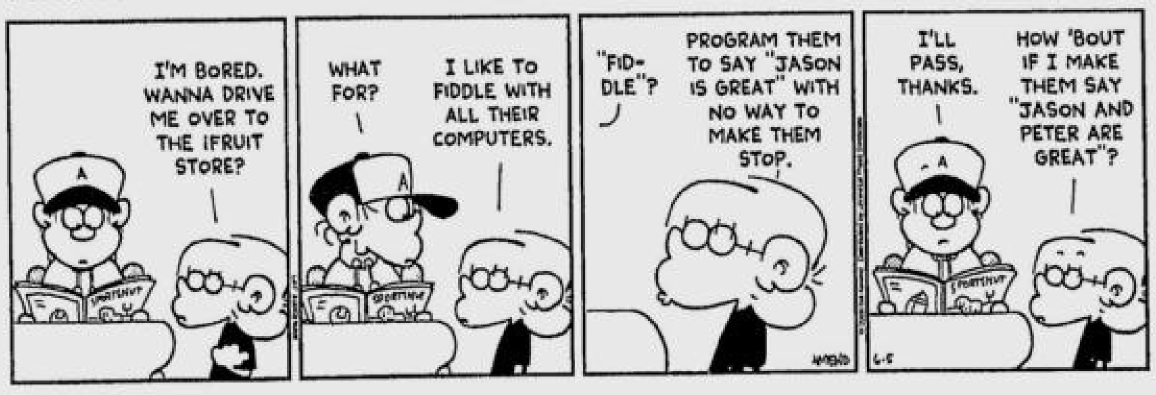
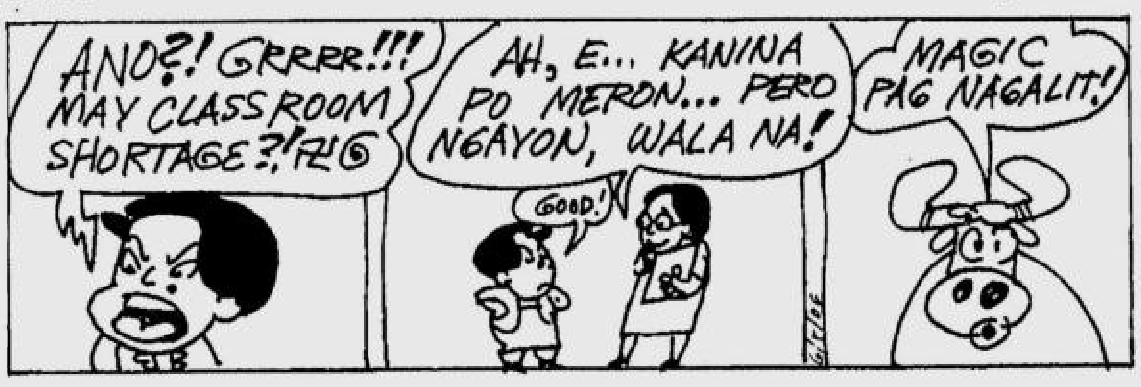
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


I'M BORED. WANNA DRIVE ME OVER TO THE IFRUIT STORE?
WHAT FOR?
I LIKE TO FIDDLE WITH ALL THEIR COMPUTERS.
"FID-DLE"?
PROGRAM THEM TO SAY "JASON IS GREAT" WITH NO WAY TO MAKE THEM STOP.
I'LL PASS, THANKS.
HOW 'BOUT IF I MAKE THEM SAY "JASON AND PETER ARE GREAT"?

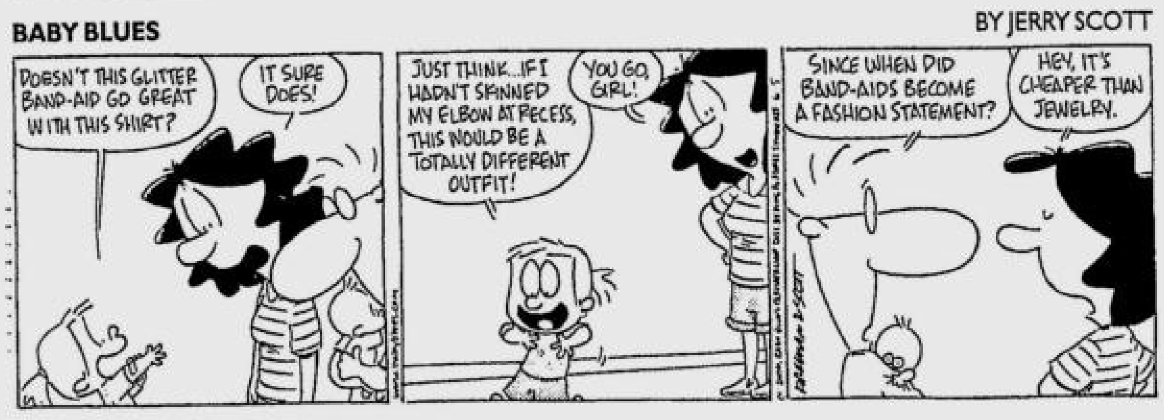
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ANO?! GRRRR!!! MAY CLASSROOM SHORTAGE?!
AH, E... KANINA PO MERON... PERO NGAYON, WALA NA!
GOOD!
MAGIC PAG NAGALIT!

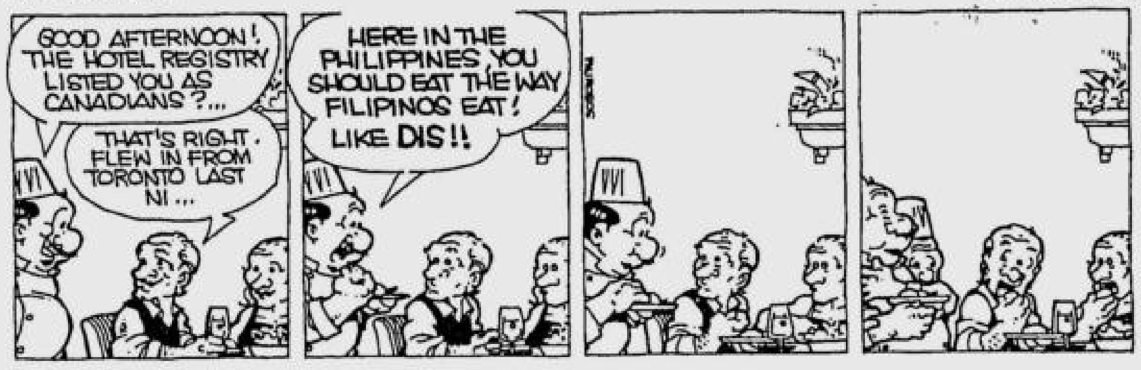
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


DOESN'T THIS GLITTER BAND-AID GO GREAT WITH THIS SHIRT?
IT SURE DOES!
JUST THINK...IF I HADN'T SKINNED MY ELBOW AT RECESS, THIS WOULD BE A TOTALLY DIFFERENT OUTFIT!
YOU GO, GIRL!
SINCE WHEN DID BAND-AIDS BECOME A FASHION STATEMENT?
HEY, IT'S CHEAPER THAN JEWELRY.

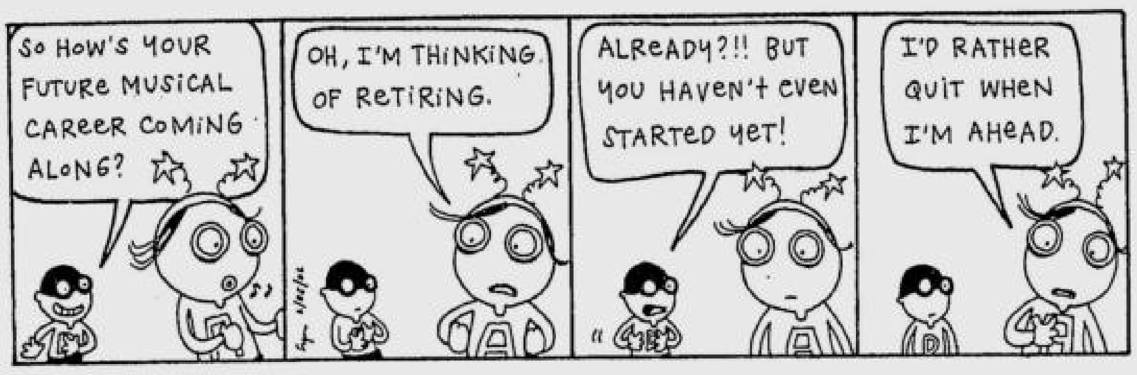
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


GOOD AFTERNOON! THE HOTEL REGISTRY LISTED YOU AS CANADIANS?...
THAT'S RIGHT. FLEW IN FROM TORONTO LAST NI...
HERE IN THE PHILIPPINES YOU SHOULD EAT THE WAY FILIPINOS EAT! LIKE DIS!!

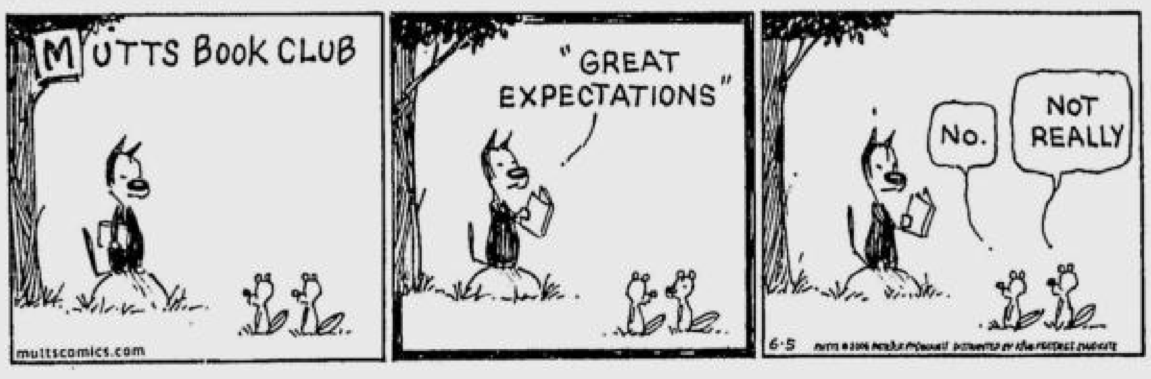
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


So HOW'S YOUR FUTURE MUSICAL CAREER COMING ALONG?
OH, I'M THINKING OF RETIRING.
ALREADY?!! BUT YOU HAVEN'T EVEN STARTED YET!
I'D RATHER QUIT WHEN I'M AHEAD.

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MUTTS Book CLUB
"GREAT EXPECTATIONS"
No.
NOT REALLY
muttscomics.com

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

			3			8		
	4	7	8		9		3	
1		8				2	6	
	6			3			8	5
			6	5	7			
5	1			8			2	
	8	5				7		2
	2		1		6	3	5	
		1			8			

Difficulty Level ★ 6/05

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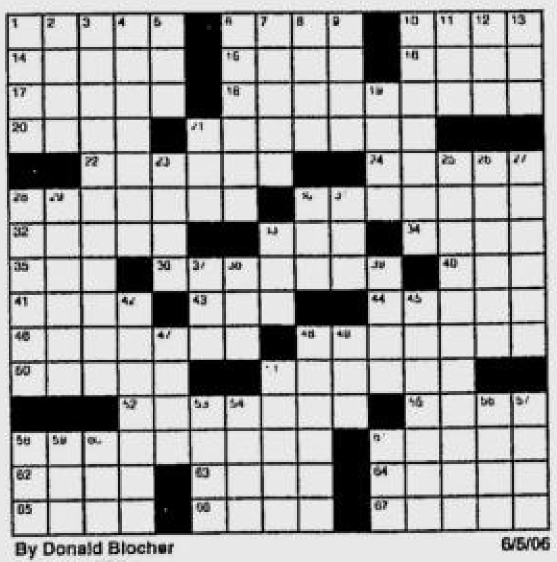
How to play Su Doku

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to Monday's puzzle will appear in this space

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Donald Blocher
Arlington, TX
6/5/06

ACROSS
1 Aromatic herb
6 Toasty
10 Unable to hear
14 MetLife competitor
15 Largest continent
16 Make over
17 Understand
18 "The Birds" star
20 Gentle
21 Type of energy
22 Effortless
24 Musical pauses
28 Class of travel
30 Spike Lee's first name
32 Civilian dress
33 Cote call
34 Accounting acronym
35 Unwell
36 Passes gossip
40 Money-managing exec.
41 Silver-tongued
43 Affirmative
44 Inquired
46 Sandblasted, perhaps
48 Decanters
50 First month in Madrid
51 Dell purchase
52 Romberg operetta
55 Citrus hybrid
58 Raw sucrose
61 Ancient Welsh priest
62 G.I. absentee
63 Sam or Trevor
64 "Guitar Town" singer Steve
65 Cincinnati nine
66 Acquires
67 MacDonald's refrain

DOWN
1 Sacks
2 Dynamic opening?
3 Bread
4 No time at all
5 Baby's first seat
6 With caution
7 In unison
8 Take the bus
9 Dillon of "Drugstore Cowboy"
10 Kind of battery
11 Elongated sea creature
12 Commotion
13 In favor of
19 Last of a million?
21 Actress Darby
23 Coconut fiber
25 No-frills drawing of a man
26 Chewy candy
27 Netlike caps
28 Political refugee
29 Bill of game shows
30 Actor Mineo
31 Computer of "2001..."
33 Egyptian god of pleasure
37 Storm center
38 Tycoon Turner
39 Poet Teasdale
42 Oil quantities
45 Japanese warrior
47 Pigeon calls
48 Landmarks of heaped stones
49 Pub serving
51 Viewpoint
53 Warbled
54 Chills and fever
56 Caron film
57 Logical beginning?
58 Train unit
59 Wonderment
60 Land of sleep
61 Actress Ruby

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

A	B	S	C	I	S	S	A	■	B	U	S	S	E	D
R	E	T	R	O	A	C	T	■	U	N	L	A	C	E
C	L	E	A	N	C	U	T	■	T	R	U	T	H	S
A	I	R	S	■	S	T	R	A	T	E	G	I	E	S
D	E	N	S	E	■	E	A	V	E	S	■	A	L	E
E	V	E	N	T	S	■	C	A	R	T	■	I	O	R
S	E	R	E	N	A	■	T	I	C	■	D	E	N	T
■	■	■	S	A	C	K	■	L	U	K	E	■	■	■
M	U	S	S	■	R	I	L	■	P	E	T	I	T	E
A	N	T	■	J	E	L	L	■	S	E	A	M	E	N
S	L	Y	■	I	D	L	E	S	■	P	I	P	E	D
C	O	M	P	E	N	S	A	T	E	■	N	I	N	E
A	V	I	A	T	E	■	V	I	R	G	I	N	I	A
R	E	E	V	E	S	■	E	N	D	A	N	G	E	R
A	D	D	E	R	S	■	S	T	A	G	G	E	R	S

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6/3/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY You are definitely artistic. You have a vivid imagination. You have a wide range of expression. Family is very important to you; however, some relatives and friends will consider you to be a bit eccentric. You're just not afraid to test your ideas! This year, friendships and partnerships will be extremely important to you. They will be your major focus.

Birthdate of: Max Casella, actor; Sandra Bernhard, comedian; Bjorn Borg, tennis player.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) You're tempted to go overboard when spending money today. You might come across a bargain you can't resist. (Sometimes you can't afford to take advantage of an incredible savings!)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Some kind of excessive indulgence will tempt you today. It could be related to eating, drinking or going overboard with everything! (A minute on the lips is a lifetime on the hips.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Don't make promises at work that you can't keep. Give yourself a reasonable deadline for everything. Your attempt to please somebody today could get you into hot water tomorrow.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) It's good to be generous to friends, but there is such a thing as idiot compassion. True generosity is giving what is needed. Don't try to impress anybody with extravagance.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Because you want to make a good impression on important people today (your boss, a VIP or a parent), you might promise someone the Moon. Don't do it. If you have any doubts, say nothing.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) You might have to curb your plans about travel or something having to do with publishing and education. There's a tendency to go overboard today.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Don't give away the farm! If you have earned your own rightful share of something, take it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Good feelings between you and partners or close friends could make you go overboard with generosity or promises about the future. There's no need to do this. (Caution.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Today Venus opposes your ruler, Jupiter. This encourages a tendency to be excessive and overindulgent. Don't make promises to co-workers that you can't keep. Don't try to please everybody.

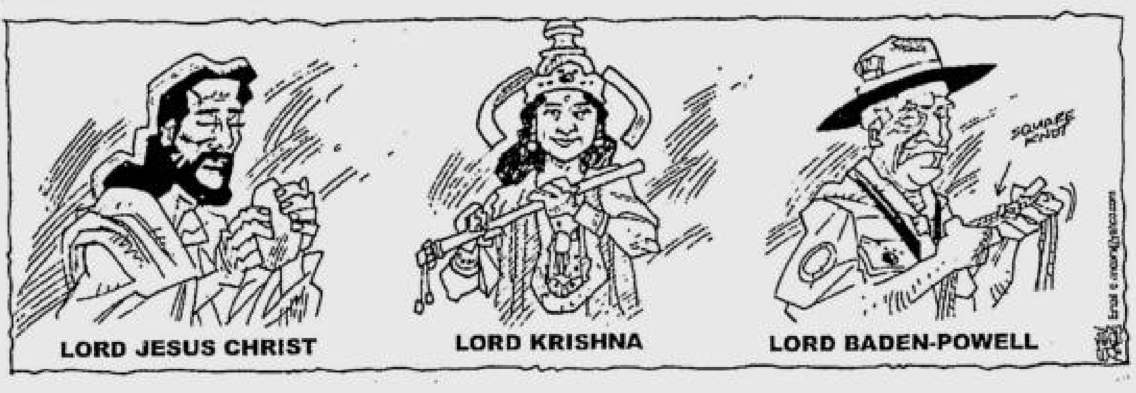
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) You could go overboard partying today! You might also be overzealous in making promises to children. Try to keep things on an even keel. Practice moderation.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) Don't spend too much money on family members or something special for your home today. It's OK to have a treat, but you don't want to bankrupt yourself.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Your enthusiasm about something could cause you to get carried away. You might promise too much to siblings and friends. Be careful about what you can actually deliver.

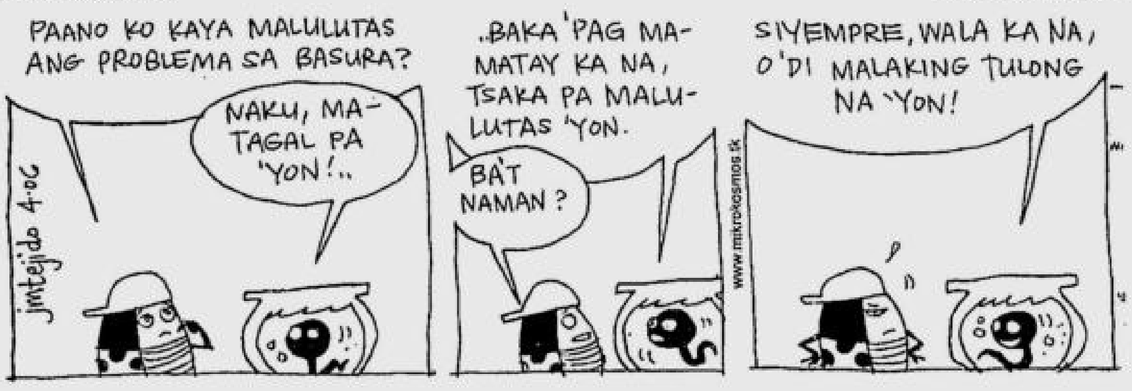
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


SQUARE KNOT
LORD JESUS CHRIST
LORD KRISHNA
LORD BADEN-POWELL

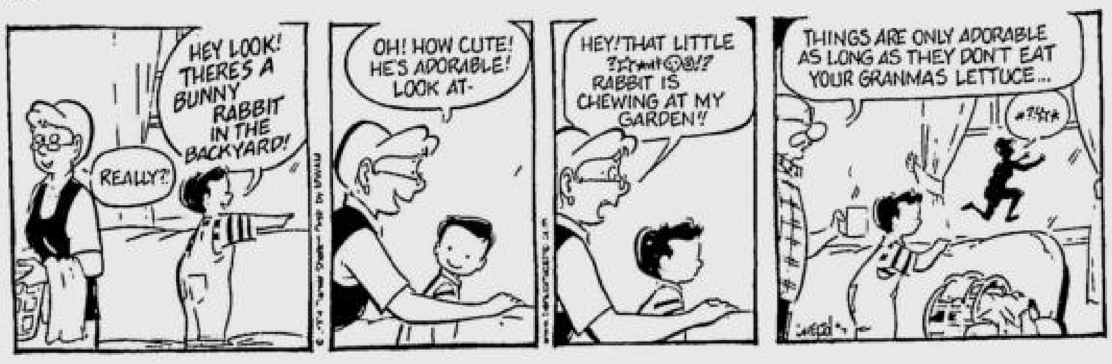
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PAANO KO KAYA MALULUTAS ANG PROBLEMA SA BASURA?
NAKU, MATAGAL PA 'YON!..
..BAKA 'PAG MAMATAY KA NA, TSAKA PA MALULUTAS 'YON.
BA'T NAMAN?
SIYEMPRE, WALA KA NA, O'DI MALAKING TULONG NA 'YON!
www.mikrokosmos.tk

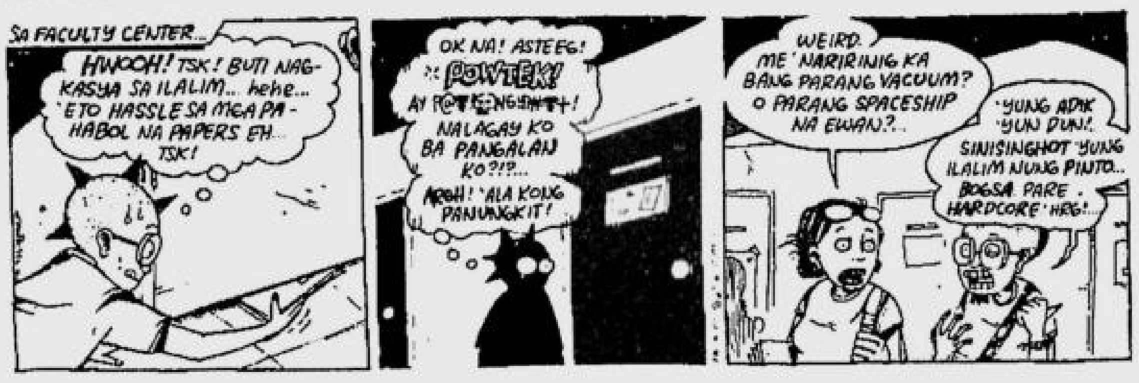
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


HEY LOOK! THERE'S A BUNNY RABBIT IN THE BACKYARD!
REALLY?
OH! HOW CUTE! HE'S ADORABLE! LOOK AT-
HEY! THAT LITTLE ?!*#@!? RABBIT IS CHEWING AT MY GARDEN!!
THINGS ARE ONLY ADORABLE AS LONG AS THEY DON'T EAT YOUR GRANMA'S LETTUCE...

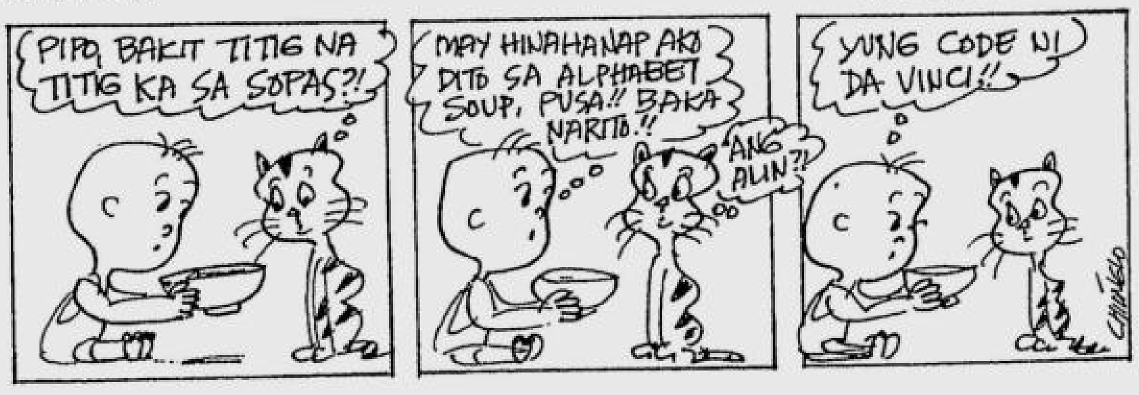
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


SA FACULTY CENTER...
HWOOH! TSK! BUTI NAGKASYA SA ILALIM... hehe... 'ETO HASSLE SA MGA PAHABOL NA PAPERS EH... TSK!
OK NA! ASTEEG!
POWTEK!
NALAGAY KO BA PANGALAN KO?!?...
ARGH! 'ALA KONG PANUNGKIT!
WEIRD. ME' NARIRINIG KA BANG PARANG VACUUM? O PARANG SPACESHIP NA EWAN?..
'YUNG ADIK 'YUN DUN!. SINISINGHOT 'YUNG ILALIM NUNG PINTO... BOGSA PARE. HARDCORE' HEG!..

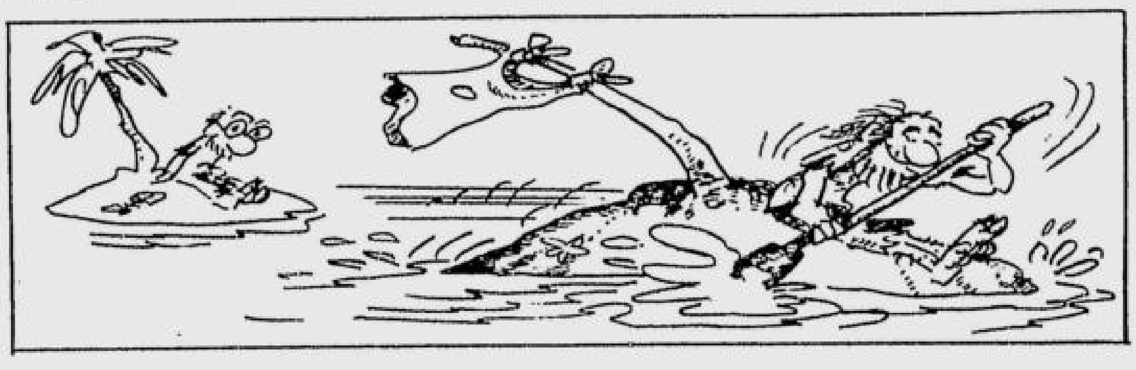
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PIPO, BAKIT TITIG NA TITIG KA SA SOPAS?!
MAY HINAHANAP AKO DITO SA ALPHABET SOUP, PUSA!! BAKA NARITO!!
ANG ALIN?!
YUNG CODE NI DA VINCI!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



Toti Fuentes in Cagayan de Oro concert on June 24

XAVIER UNIVERSITY IN CAGAYAN DE ORO and the city itself are currently in the thick of preparations for what they consider a landmark event—the homecoming visit and concert of international musician Toti Fuentes, June 22-24, 2006.

Billed "An Evening with Toti Fuentes (Cagayan's Pride)" the concert is presented by lawyer Rufus Rodriguez, a Xavier U alumnus like Fuentes.

TOTI Fuentes

Concert proceeds will fund the refurbishing of the university museum.

Fuentes is flying in from Chicago where he is based.

Call 721-0801 or (0917) 899-1835.

MTV Youth Fair

Music, gadgets and gaming come together at the MTV Youth Fair, June 11 and 12 at the-Rockwell Tent in Makati. VJs KC Montero, Cindy Kurleto and Marc Abaya hosts a show featuring some of today's hottest bands—Dicta License, Up Dharma Down, Itchyworms, 6cyclemind, Pedicab, Kjwan, Sheila and the Insects, and Parokya Ni Edgar.

Meanwhile, "MTV Live" continues at Café Lupe in Makati. Catch Pupil on June 9, True Faith on June 23, and Orange and Lemons on June 30. Shows start at 8:30 p.m. Call 890-3319.

MYMP

ORANGE and Lemons

SHOW TIME

Nieves show moved

"Tito Nieves Live in Manila" has been moved to August. Sold tickets will be reimbursed. Call 891-9999.

Today

Michaelangelo and Overtone at Tavern on the Square

Silk and Steel at Merk's Bar Bistro, Greenbelt 3

Tomorrow

Julianne and Sitti at Tavern on the Square

Aretha and the Souled Out Band at Merk's Bar

June 7

The Dorques and Session Road at Tavern on the Square

Wednesday Jazz Festival at Merk's Bar with Richard Merk, Eddie Katindig and Judith Banal

June 8

Acoustic Jive at Merk's Bar

Kearney Street at Tavern on the Square

June 9

Fat Session at Tavern on the Square

MTV Live Sessions at Café Lupe featuring Pupil

Akafellas at Robinsons Metro East

June 10

Brown Republic at Tavern on the Square

Aretha and the Souled Out Band at Merk's Bar

June 12

Strings of Soul and Dindo at Tavern on the Square

Silk and Steel at Merk's Bar Bistro, Greenbelt 3

June 13

Julianne and Sitti at Tavern on the Square

Aretha and the Souled Out Band at Merk's Bar

June 14

Sandilea and MYMP at Tavern on the Square

Wednesday Jazz Festival at Merk's Bar with Richard Merk, Eddie Katindig and Judith Banal

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Day One at Tavern on the Square

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Cascades 2006 World Tour at the Subic Bay Freeport

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Robin WILLIAMS
Holly HUNTER
RIBISI HARRELSON BLAKE NELSON-LOHMAN
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Robin Williams, Holly Hunter, Giovanni Ribisi
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synopsis:
This is story about a man, a travel agent Paul Barnes, selling dreams in a financial nightmare. Up to his neck in debt and snow, with a foul-mouthed wife, Margaret Barnes suffering from Tourette's syndrome. Paul hopes to solve his problems with the help of his missing brother Raymond. He tries to cash in on his missing brother's Life Insurance policy of US$1 million. However he comes face to face with Ted Watters, a tough young insurance investigator. Ted denies Paul's request as Raymond has only been missing for five years, not long enough to pronounce him deceased.

MTRCB Rating: GP

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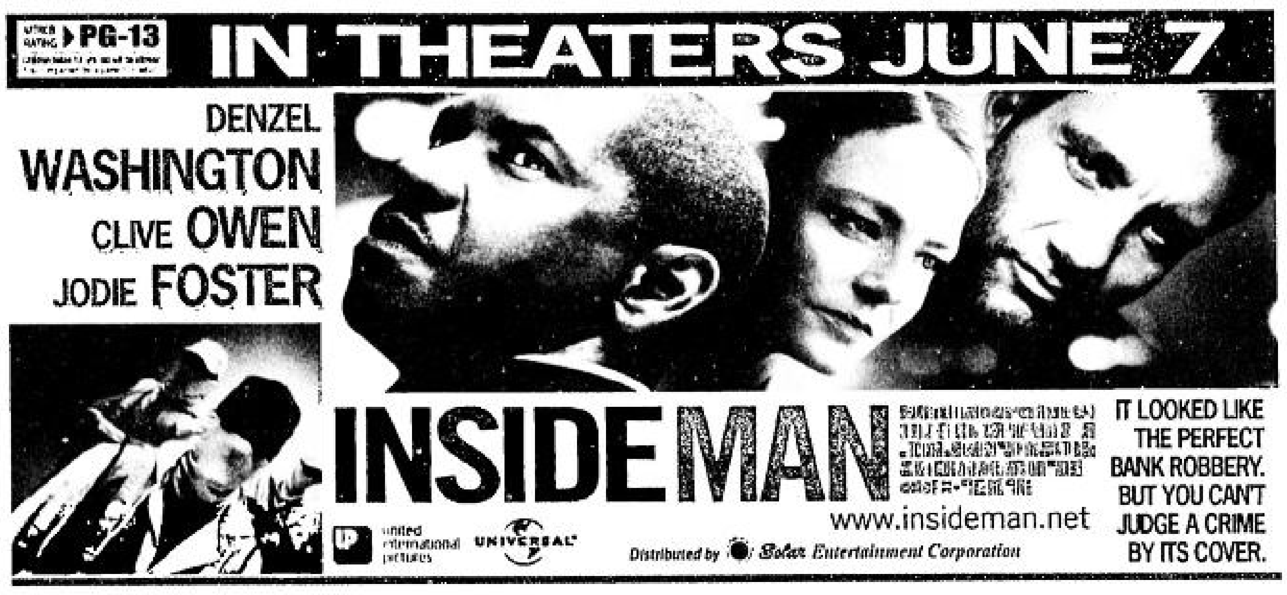
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G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 THE DA VINCI CODE	2 THE BENCHWARMERS	3 THX X-MEN: THE LAST STAND GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	5 THE DA VINCI CODE	6 FAILURE TO LAUNCH	7 THE DA VINCI CODE
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	2 FAILURE TO LAUNCH		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX X-MEN: THE LAST STAND GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX FAILURE TO LAUNCH GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND GUARANTEED SEATS	4 THE BENCHWARMERS GUARANTEED SEATS	5 THE DA VINCI CODE GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	2 FAILURE TO LAUNCH		
	3 THE BENCHWARMERS	4 ALL ABOUT LOVE	5 THE DA VINCI CODE	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE BENCHWARMERS	2 ALL ABOUT LOVE	3 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	4 THE DA VINCI CODE
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	2 FAILURE TO LAUNCH		
	3 THE DA VINCI CODE	4 ALL ABOUT LOVE	5 MANAY PO	

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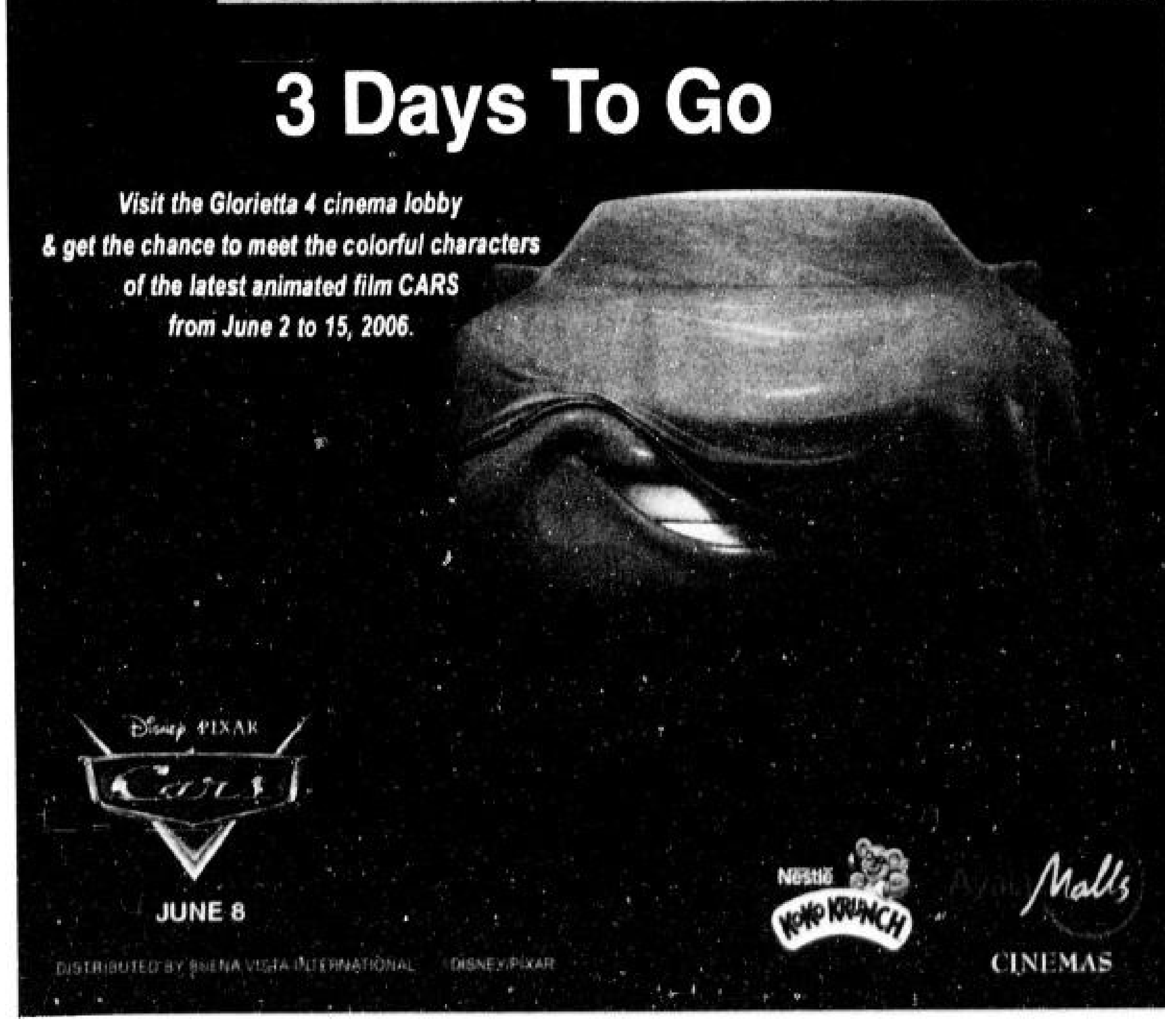
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Zsazsa, Zsazsa!

From page A2-1

Rufa Mae Quinto and Padilla were considered for the part.

Now, "Zsazsa" seems back to, well, Zsazsa.

"I talked to Rufa Mae last night," Monteverde recounted. "In the end, it would be better for her because she has another MMFF entry, 'Short Time.'"

As for Ogie Alcasid, who was originally tapped by Meily to play Ada, the gay beautician who turns into super-heroine Zsazsa Zaturnnah?

"I haven't talked to Ogie yet," Monteverde said. "He is in the US."

Entertainment vs stories…

From page A2-1

which tell apart entertainment from news events. But in reality, there is actually none."

Racquel pointed out that there was no rule that said celebrity weddings or deaths were entertainment events.

"These events, just like the attempt to the summit of Everest, generate national interest and, as a result, are news events," he said.

Raquel recalled that GMA 7 had previously been denied coverage of entertainment events by ABS-CBN, which owned the exclusive coverage right to such events, like the wedding of then presidential daughter Jackie Ejercito to Beaver Lopez.

ABS-CBN says: 'Apples should be compared to apples. We've said our piece; we rest our case'

During the wedding, GMA 7 news crews outside the Manila Cathedral were denied entry, Raquel noted.

Likewise, he said, GMA 7 had been denied coverage of the funeral and burial of young actor Rico Yan, who was an ABS-CBN talent.

Raquel insisted that his network had consistently treated the Everest attempt as a historic event.

"Since we have the exclusive coverage rights to the summit bid of Romi Garduce and all events related to it, the network found it appropriate to notify the other stations about it," he said, adding that GMA 7's coverage of the other Filipino mountaineers, particularly Oracion and Emata who were supported by ABS-CBN, was not without complications, either.

"There were occasions when our GMA Everest team at the Base Camp was restricted from covering the ABS-CBN expedition team members," Raquel said.

Sought out for comment, Maloli K. Espinosa, ABS-CBN vice president for government and corporate affairs, merely stated: "We've said our piece; we rest our case. Entertainment stories should not be compared to Everest. Apples should be compared to apples. As Maria [Ressa] has said, we don't have exclusives on news events. Perhaps GMA 7 should remember an exclusive of theirs on Pope John Paul II. But that would only make the argument longer."

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2	X-MEN 3	12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 8:10, 10:50	PG-13
3	BENCH WARMERS	11:50, 1:50, 3:50, 5:50 7:50, 9:50	PG-13
4	THE DA VINCI CODE	12:30, 3:50, 7:15, 10:40	R-18

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3 (DTS) ALL ABOUT LOVE
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5 GOLD (DOLBY) CHAOS
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3 (DOLBY) X - MEN - 3
4 THE DA VINCI CODE
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4 ALL ABOUT LOVE
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3 (DOLBY) THE DA VINCI CODE
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2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 (DOLBY) THE DA VINCI CODE
4 (DTS) X - MEN - 3
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2 MANAY PO

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3 ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 MANAY PO

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
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2 (DOLBY) MANAY PO
3 (DOLBY) X - MEN - 3
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2 THE BENCHWARMERS
3 ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 MANAY PO
5 CHAOS

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5 MANAY PO

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2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
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2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 X - MEN - 3
4 MANAY PO

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2 X - MEN - 3
3 MANAY PO

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4 MANAY PO
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2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 X - MEN - 3
4 MANAY PO

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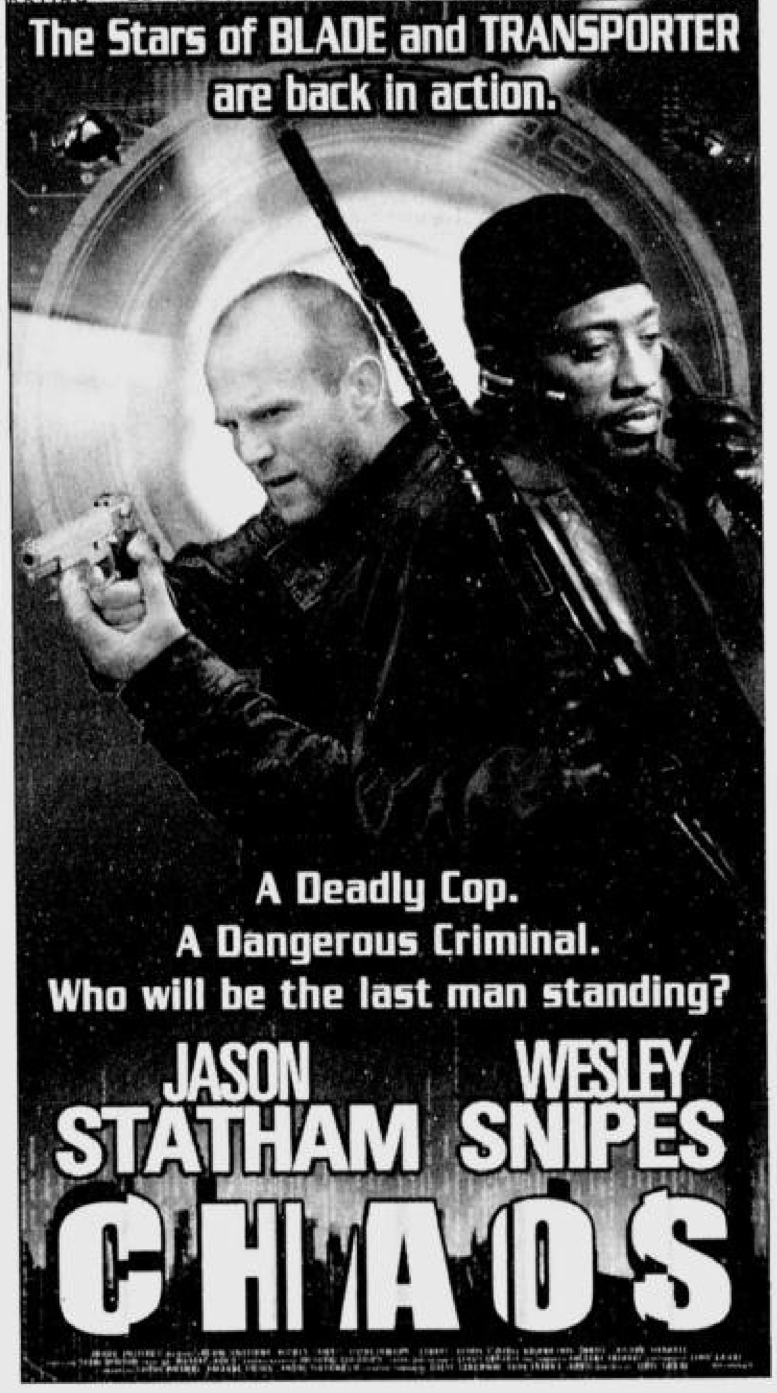
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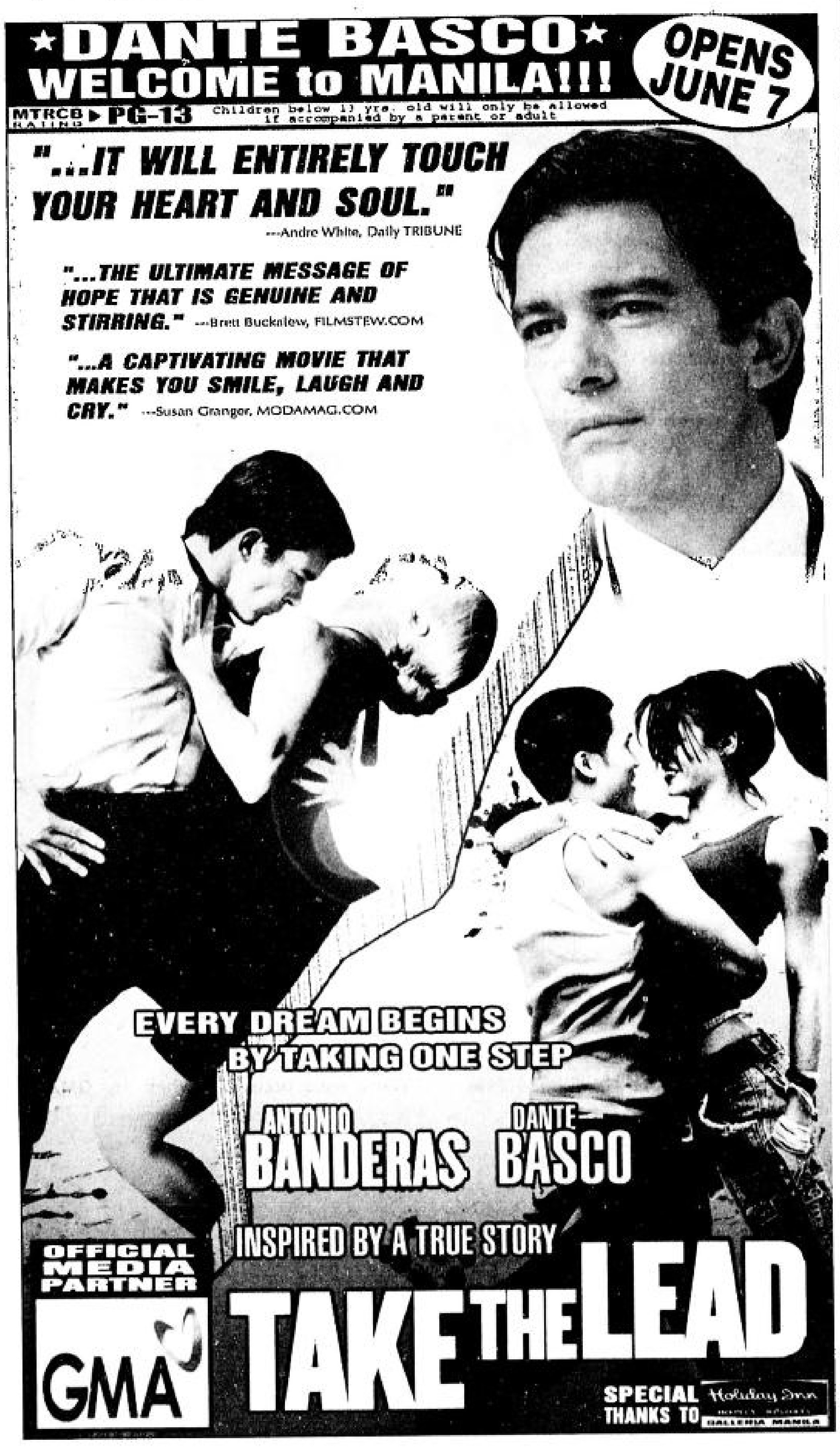
'MURDER 19C' Today at 11:30 a.m. on the Hallmark Channel, catch the replay of "Detective Murdoch Mysteries: Except the Dying," first of the trilogy "Murder 19C," which premiered last night. The second part airs June 11, 9 p.m.; the third on June 18, same time, with next-day replays.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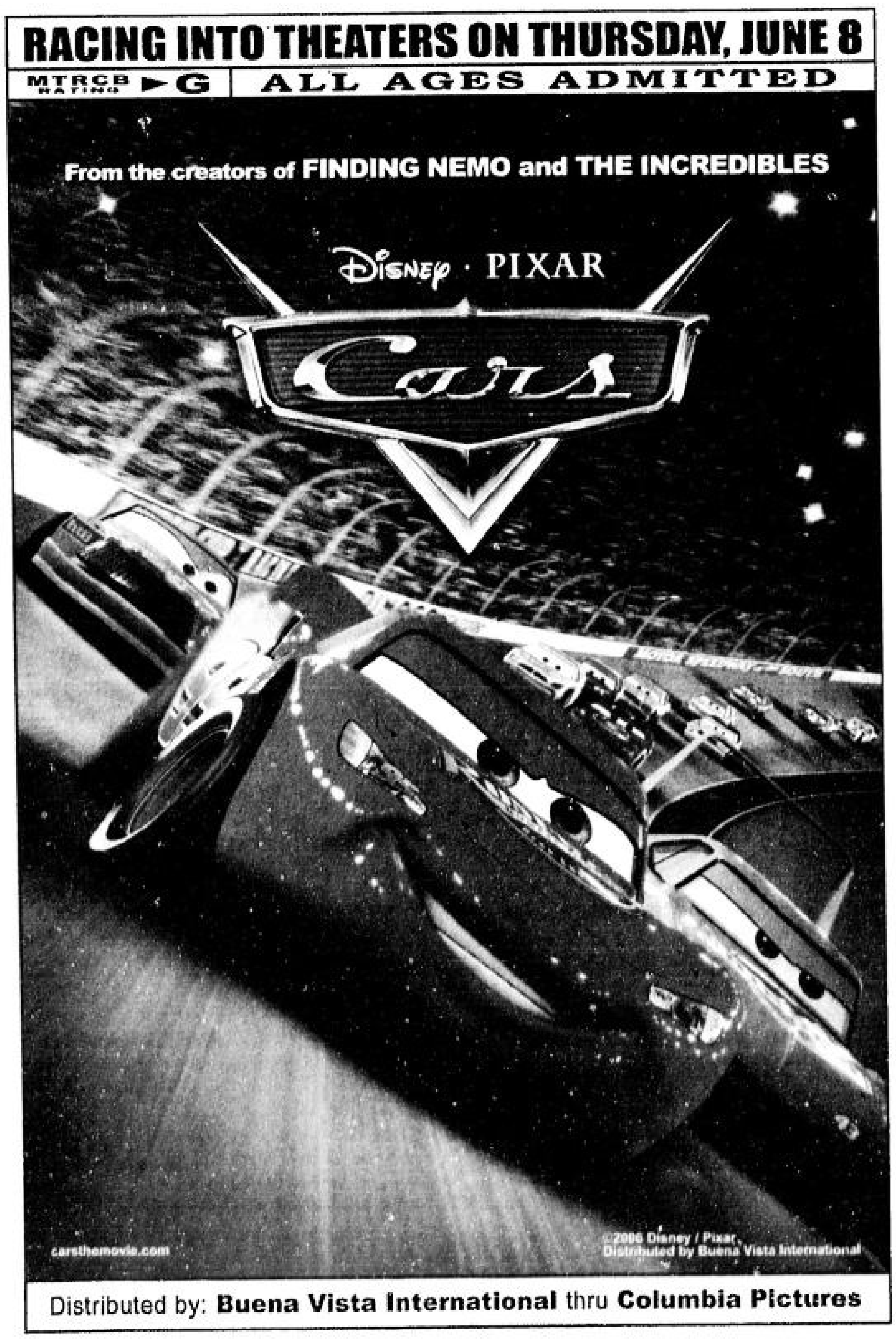
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1 X-MEN 3 • THX
12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:30

2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

3 FAILURE TO LAUNCH
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

4 X-MEN 3
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

5 THE DA VINCI CODE
12:30 3:40 6:50 10:00

6 THE DA VINCI CODE
12:00 3:10 6:20 9:30

7 OVER THE HEDGE 12:00 2:10
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 4:20 7:00 9:40

8 MANAY PO
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

9 CHAOS
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

10 THE BENCHWARMERS
1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30 9:40

ERMITA 536 7809 to 12

1 X-MEN 3 10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00

2 FAILURE TO LAUNCH
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

3 THE BIG WHITE 11:00 1:00 3:00
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 5:20 7:40 10:00

4 ALL ABOUT LOVE
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

5 CHAOS
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

6 THE BENCHWARMERS
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 9:50

7 MANAY PO
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

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1 CHAOS
1:15 3:30 6:25 9:00

2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
11:30 1:55 4:20 6:45 9:10

3 FAILURE TO LAUNCH
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

4 THE DA VINCI CODE
12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00

5 OVER THE HEDGE 11:00 12:45 2:30
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 4:20 6:45 9:10

6 THE BENCHWARMERS
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

7 X-MEN 3
11:40 2:00 4:20 6:40 9:10

8 MANAY PO
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

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5 X-MEN 3
6 THE BENCHWARMERS

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2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
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3 THE BENCHWARMERS
4 MANAY PO
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3 X-MEN 3
4 ALL ABOUT LOVE
5 THE BENCHWARMERS

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3 MANAY PO
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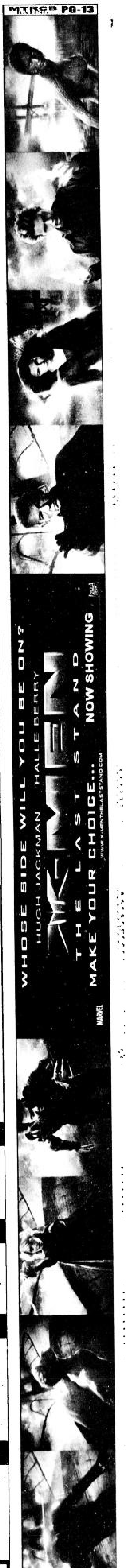
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MARVEL

Hundreds turn out for 1st 'Idol' tryout

By Marinel R. Cruz

THOUSANDS TURNED OUT ON SATURDAY AT THE first major "Philippine Idol" auditions at the PICC in Pasay City, but only 80 went home with the highly coveted Blue Form.

"Blue means you're in," said ABC 5 executive Jim Libiran, half of an all-important duo in charge of the casting for the first season of the reality talent search on ABC 5. Carmela M. Buhain, supervising professor in music at the Philippine Normal University, helped Libiran pick the 80.

Only a total of 100 Blue Forms are supposed to be given out. But major auditions in Mindanao (Davao City) and the Visayas (Cebu City) are yet to be held on June 23 and July 4, respectively. The organizers said they will decide later whether or not to increase the quota.

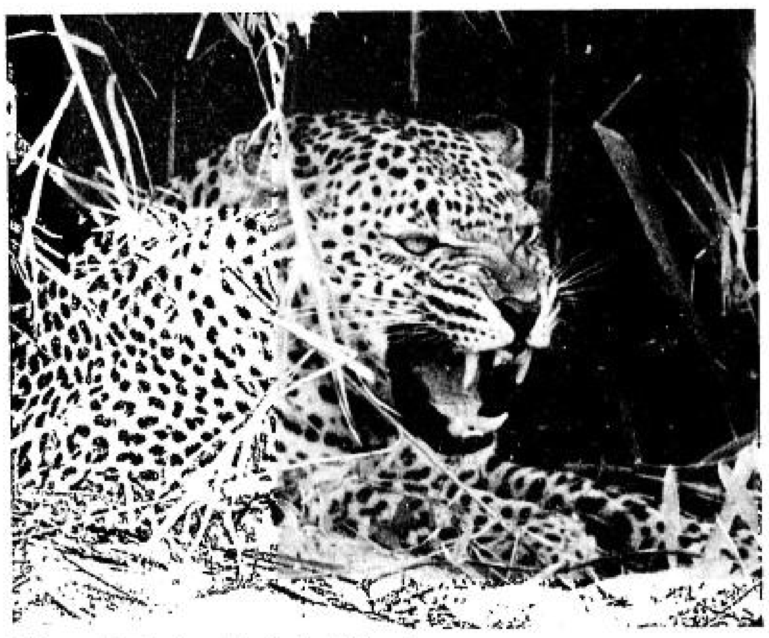
On Saturday, contestants began lining up at the PICC Gate 2 at 6 a.m. They were asked to fill up application forms and were each given a number.

At the time of INQUIRER Entertainment's visit in mid-afternoon, the number of applicants had already exceeded a thousand. As we write, the recorded number has reached almost 2,000.

Said Evelyn Joseph, program production associate, "The casting is preliminary to the final elimination, which will be with the three judges."

ABC 5 announced the judges last week: Ryan Cayabyab, Asia's Queen of Song Pilita Corrales and rapper-TV host Francis Magalona.

HECTIC. At the end of the day, the number of applicants had risen to almost 2,000. This was the scene inside the PICC in Pasay City. RODEL ROTONI



"Planet Action" on the Animal Planet

Kid Fit

Nickelodeon's Kids' Choice Awards

NICKSTERS, CELEBRATE YOUR power to choose! The much-awaited Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards (KCA) Preview Party is back. It is the only awards show that gives kids the power to vote for their favorites—in movies, television, music, sports and much more—and honors their opinions with a live presentation featuring the stars of their choice.

Mark the date: July 8, 2006. Make your way to the Aliw Theater, Star City, CCP Complex, Pasay City. Gates open at 2 p.m. and the show starts at 4 p.m.

But before that, remember that the nomination period started on June 1 and is ongoing. For the Pinoy Wannabee Award—the trophy given to a celebrity whom kids consider as their role model—this year's nominees are: "Pinoy Big Brother" hotshot, Sam Milby; "Little Big Star" grand champ Sam Concepcion; TV-movie star and commercial model Izza Calzado; boxing champion Manny Pacquiao; and TV host Bianca Gonzales.

You can vote online at www.nicksplat.com/kca. The Kids' Choice Awards is now in its 19th year.

Garfield at Robinsons

Garfield is visiting Robinsons malls this month and next. Kids are invited to meet-and-greet sessions with the famous feline on June 10 at Robinsons Metroeast, June 11 at Robinsons Place Novaliches, June 16 at RP Manila and June 17 at RP Pioneer. Then he goes to RP Dasmariñas on June 24, RP Sta. Rosa on June 25 and RP Imus on July 1. "Garfield: A Tale of Two Kitties," opens June 14 in all Robinsons Movieworld.

Animal Planet news

Around the globe, animals and their habitats are being threatened. The danger is often the result of human behavior—pollution, global warming, deforestation and fishing practices. To show viewers how they can help the conservation cause, Animal Planet and World Wildlife Fund present "Planet Action," an all-new eco-reality series. The series premiered on June 3 (encores June 7) and continues for six Saturdays—June 10, 17, 24, July 1, July 8.

'Cartoonival' in July

"Cartoonival," Cartoon Network's first-ever theatrical production, bows before Philippine audiences in July.

For the first time ever, CN's popular toons will act together in a stage production.

The cast includes The Powerpuff Girls, Dexter & Dee Dee, Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi, plus Mac & Bloo and their friends from Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends.

Details will be announed on CN.

Disney curriculum

Playhouse Disney Channel, Walt Disney TV's second pay-TV in the Philippines—and the country's first and only pay-TV channel devoted to preschoolers—offers programs based on the Whole Child Curriculum, developed by early childhood specialist Dr. Renee Cherow-O'Leary. The channel is currently available on Destiny Cable, SkyCable Platinum, Las Piñas Cable TV, Muntinlupa Cable TV and Parañaque Cable TV in Metro Manila.

GARFIELD

'Dokyus' both good & bland

By Paul Daza
Contributor

Review

ABC 5'S WEEKLY LATE SHOW "DOKYU" HAS become a popular program among independent and documentary filmmakers. By presenting two Filipino-made documentaries every Thursday night to a passionate niche audience, "Dokyu" has become the only notable venue for works untainted by the mindless escapism we see in the TV landscape. In fact, many Pinoy indie filmmakers dream of having their works exhibited on the program.

Like any regular show, however, "Dokyu" has good episodes and bland ones. A recent feature about homosexuality turned out, surprisingly, to be dull and boring. After that, however, came a heartbreaking eye-opener about childless Americans who spend $25,000 to adopt unwanted babies in China.

Hit or miss

The series' hit-or-miss quality was once again obvious in the June 1 telecast, which featured two works shot in Cebu. "Isaw Bai? (Wanna Eat Isaw, Friend?)" was by three Filipinos who studied in the famed London International Film School. "Images Of Women In Cebuano Films," was the thesis project of Dianne Nicolas, a Mass Communications student in UP Cebu. Of the two, the latter was definitely more substantial.

Despite excellent image quality, a charming Cebuano music score and impressively clear audio, "Isaw" didn't feel much like a docu. Instead of thoroughly researching the subject and consulting culinary and cultural experts about the popularity of the Larsians dining haunt, all the filmmakers did was chat up customers and stall owners apparently during the same night. It felt more like a "One Night in Larsians" slice-of-life featurette.

Sure, it was mildly surprising to see an Australian and a Swede enjoying barbecued chicken and pork intestines; and yes, it's cute to ask a waitress is she's ever fallen in love with a customer. But shouldn't documentaries be more filling? At the end of the eight-minute featurette, we're told by a friend of the filmmakers that "Isaw" was a big hit when it was screened in London. An investigation into why that was so may have been more interesting to Pinoy viewers, who probably don't see eating *isaw* as a big deal.

Though not as technically polished, Dianne Nicolas' "Images Of Women In Cebuano Films" was a more enriching viewing experience. More than 25 minutes long, it used clips from more than 20 Cebuano movies and included the insights of more than a dozen filmmakers, academicians, and equal rights proponents. Using easy-to-follow narration and judicious editing, Nicolas succeeds in her two-fold objective of revealing the predictable and clichéd portrayal of females in Cebuano movies, and showing that Cebu used to have a thriving film industry. She tickles our minds with questions such as, "Why are single women always shown alone in their bedrooms?" and "Why is there invariably a scene in every Cebuano film where the mother is shown in the kitchen?"

RP cinema's future

Also thought-provoking are the contradictory statements made by two interviewees about the future of Philippine cinema. One man says tearjerkers that show women as victims will forever be a staple of movies; another says that all clichés and stereotypes must be discarded if cinema is to survive.

Dianne Nicolas' docu makes the viewer hope not only for the renaissance of Cebuano films and Filipino films in general, but also for the rise of more female Filipino filmmakers. Since it's obvious that she hopes to one day see a more realistic and accurate portrayal of females in local films, maybe she should put her obvious talent to good use and make a feature film, *asap*.

DANTE Basco, Fil-Am actor and dancer (far left), with the inter-cultural cast of "Take the Lead," headed by Antonio Banderas.

Crank up the feel-good factor

Critic singles out 'sexy tango' featuring Fil-Am actor Dante Basco

Review

NEW YORK—LIKE "LORDS OF DOGTOWN," the skateboarding film based on the documentary "Dogtown and Z-Boys," "Take the Lead" was a far more effective story in its original nonfiction form.

It's inspired by the work of Pierre Dulaine, whose dance classes in New York City public schools also provided the basis for the charming 2005 documentary "Mad Hot Ballroom."

But the moves have been moved from elementary school to high school, and the feel-good factor has been cranked up. ("Mad Hot Ballroom" put a smile on your face without trying so hard.)

Here, Antonio Banderas serves up tough love to at-risk kids as the old-world Dulaine, teaching them the tango and the foxtrot with the hope that they'll simultaneously learn discipline and dignity. But Banderas is so low-key in his gentlemanly, romantic manner, he makes a predictable movie more tolerable than it should be.

The feature debut from Liz Friedlander is shot and edited in fluid, vibrant fashion, as you would expect from a veteran music video director. But the speed with which these kids combine traditional ballroom-dance steps with modern hip-hop music is ridiculous. It's like something out of "Fame"—you fully expect them to run out into the street and start dancing on the tops of taxi cabs.

Among the motley group in detention, who will be forced to partner up and boogie down, are the star-crossed Rock (Rob Brown from "Finding Forrester") and LaRhette (Yaya DaCosta), each of whom blames the other for their older brothers' violent, untimely deaths. (Dianne Houston's script has Pierre making a Tybalt-and-Mercutio comparison, in case we couldn't figure out the subplot's Shakespearean origins for ourselves.)

There's also the astonishingly hot Sasha (Jenna Dewan), who's the target of both Ramos (Dante Basco) and Danjou (Elijah Kelley) on and off the dance floor. (A sexy three-way tango they perform at the climactic citywide dance competition nearly gets them disqualified; it's vampy but fun.)

Then there are a couple of cases of forbidden interracial love, including the tentative romance between the very large, very black Monster (gentle giant Brandon T. Andrews) and the very petite, very white Caitlin (Lauren Collins), who practices for her upcoming cotillion with Pierre's low-income misfits because she feels more comfortable with them than she does on the Upper East Side.

"You need to dance for yourself, not for anybody else," Pierre tells Caitlin. A shamelessly saccharine line, but Banderas doesn't oversell it, which surprisingly makes it work. Collins is sweet and sort of lovely in her awkwardness on the receiving end of this advice, which helps a great deal.

Among the other potentially cringeworthy lines from Pierre as he tries to inspire his students: "I look around this room and all I see is choices—choices waiting to be made."

You have a choice, too. You could go out and see this feel-good facsimile and be moderately entertained, or rent "Mad Hot Ballroom" and feel yourself becoming genuinely moved by the real thing.

Christy Lemire, AP

Battle of the blockbusters

X-MEN

"THE DA VINCI CODE" GROSSED AN IMpressive $77M on its first weekend, but its triumph has turned out to be dismayingly short-lived: The following week, it was pushed down to second place by "X-Men: The Last Stand," which demolished the competition with a whopping $107M first-weekend take.

Many blockbusters rule the box office for at least two weekends, but "Da Vinci" failed to "defend" its supremacy because the "X-Men" sequel was so strong.

What made it such a giant-killer? We believe the fact that it was advertised as the last "X-Men" episode had something to do with it. Fans of the film franchise must have felt they simply had to see it to round out their entire "X-Men" experience.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

In addition, the "Farewell" format made it logical for the production to showcase a veritable convention of super-mutants, thus making for greater variety and excitement than usual.

Finally, the production also benefited from good reviews and positive word of mouth from satisfied movie patrons.

A related question: Why have movies about mutants, some of whom look rather weird and even "monstrous," clicked so well with viewers?

The answer derives part of its "weird" logic from the similar popularity of fairy tales through the centuries.

Some fairy tales feature "monsters" like the "Beast" in "Beauty and the Beast," the title character in the "Shrek" films, plus assorted ghouls, gremlins, witches and gruesome gargoyles in other stories for children.

The fact that "scary" characters are lapped up by children indicates how potent and obversely appealing tales about monsters are, because they enable kids to "exorcise" their own real demons in a safe, "rehearsal" atmosphere.

The carry-over success that the mutants in the X-Men movie series are enjoying indicates that many adult viewers are really children at heart when it comes to the fantasy films they see, especially in the threatening dark of a movie theater.

So, will "The Last Stand" really be the final "X-Men" episode? Yes, but not to worry: Mutant characters like Wolverine will top-bill spin-off movies of their own.

That's another kind of "mutation" happening right there!

Final point: We've been told that "The Last Stand" has scored the fourth biggest debut ever, after "Spider Man," "The Revenge of the Sith" and "Shrek 2." It's instructive to note that all four top-grossing films have strong fantasy element going for them.

This may seem surprising and even amazing in these ultra-real times, but it in fact harks back to the very origins of cinema: At the very dawn of filmmaking, the cinema asserted its primal strength as a purveyor of dreams, fantasy and magic, thanks to the pioneering movies of visionaries like Georges Melies.

Flashforward 100 years to today, and the movies' dream world is once again exercising its subliminal power over today's viewers.

There's a seminal lesson to be learned from that cinematic denouement: Now we know why fantasy-based films have triumphed in the movies' continuing Battle of the Blockbusters.

Prayer for Manny P

Friends of Manny Pichel are asked to say a prayer for him in observance of his third death anniversary. Manny's sister, Lollie Mara, is grateful for the loving thoughts and affectionate recollections shared by her brother's many friends and colleagues in the entertainment, theater and media worlds, and in the academe.

For our part, we remember most Manny's rare combination of brilliance, sensitivity and generosity.

Stories about Manny's generosity—even to total strangers, particularly the poorest of the poor—continue to inspire his friends, and one filmmaker-colleague even wrote a screenplay based on one of them.

Generosity is its own reward, so we know that Manny has been richly rewarded. Yes, we continue to miss him and pray for him, but as we told Lollie, let's express our love or Manny by loving the people who meant so much to him—love you, Lollie!

SHANG CINEPLEX

Cinema	Movie	Rating	Schedule
1	CHAOS	MTRCB R-13	1:45, 4:10
2	THE DA VINCI CODE	MTRCB R-18	1:50, 4:55
3	THE BENCHWARMERS	MTRCB PG-13	12:25, 2:20, 4:15, 6:10, 8:05, 10:00
4	X-MEN 3	MTRCB PG-13	1:00, 3:20, 5:40, 8:00, 10:20
PREMIERE THEATRE	FAILURE TO LAUNCH	MTRCB PG-13	12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

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THE DA VINCI CODE R18 1:00,4:00,7:00,10:00	FAILURE TO LAUNCH PG13 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:25	BENCHWARMER PG13 1:50,3:50,5:50, 7:50,9:50
ALL ABOUT LOVE PG13 2:30,5:00,7:30,10:00	CHAOS R13 2:55,5:20,7:45,10:10	X-MEN: THE LAST STAND PG13 12:50,3:10,5:30, 7:50,10:15

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Cinema	Movie	Schedule	Rating
1	X-MEN III	12:00, 2:20, 4:40, 7:00, 9:20	PG13
2	THE DA VINCI CODE	12:00, 3:20, 6:35, 9:50	R18

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Cinema	Movie	Schedule	Rating
3	FAILURE TO LAUNCH	11:15, 1:35, 3:50, 6:05, 8:20, 10:35	PG13
4	BENCHWARMERS	10:50, 12:45, 2:40, 4:35, 6:30, 8:25, 10:20	PG13
5	X-MEN III	10:45, 1:05, 3:25, 5:45, 8:05, 10:20	PG13

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Date	Event	Time
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JULY 8,2006	GLADYS GUEVARA	9:00PM

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PROMENADE GREENHILLS

Date	Event	Time
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ALL ABOUT LOVE 12:10 / 2:35 / 5:00 / 7:25 / 9:50	MANAY PO 12:40 / 2:55 / 5:10 / 7:25 / 9:40	THE DA VINCI CODE 1:00 / 4:00 / 600 / 7:00 / 9:10 / 10:00	
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 7:10 / 9:50	OVER THE HEDGE 12:00 / 2:00 / 4:00	X-MEN 3 12:00 / 12:40 / 2:20 / 3:00 4:40 / 5:20 / 7:40 / 10:00	X-MEN 3 1:40 / 4:00 / 6:20 / 8:40

ALIMALL CINEMAS

Cinema	Movie	Schedule
1	X-MEN 3	12:15 / 2:25 / 4:35 / 6:45 / 8:55
2	THE DA VINCI CODE	12:05 / 3:00 / 5:55 / 8:50
	ALL ABOUT LOVE	12:10 R5 / 1:15 / 3:40 / 6:05 / 8:30
4	CHAOS	12:10 R 3/ 1:50 / 4:10 / 6:30 / 8:50
5	MANAY PO	12:10 R 3/ 1:45 / 4:00 / 6:15 / 8:30

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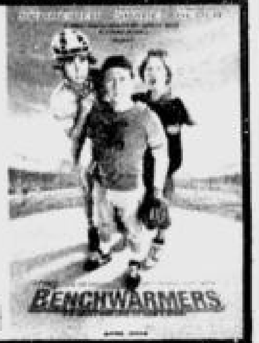

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ALL ABOUT LOVE
DIRECTOR'S CLUB
XMEN III
CENTERSTAGE
RESERVED
- XMEN III
- FAILURE TO LAUNCH
- CHAOS
- OVER THE HEDGE
- BENCHWARMERS
- MANAY PO

THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
FAILURE TO LAUNCH
CINEMA 2
XMEN III

SM NORTH EDSA
- XMEN III
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- POSEIDON
- M:I:III
- FAILURE TO LAUNCH
- BENCHWARMERS
- MANAY PO
- CHAOS

SM CITY BICUTAN
- XMEN III
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- MANAY PO
- BENCHWARMERS

SM MEGACINEMA
- POSEIDON
- BENCHWARMERS
- XMEN III
- XMEN III
- CHAOS
- M:I:III
- OVER THE HEDGE
- FAILURE TO LAUNCH
- MANAY PO
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- MANAY PO

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
- XMEN III
- CHAOS
- MANAY PO
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- BENCHWARMERS
- OVER THE HEDGE
- FAILURE TO LAUNCH
- M:I:III
- POSEIDON

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
- SILENT HILL
- OVER THE HEDGE
- BENCHWARMERS
- XMEN III
- MANAY PO
- CHAOS
- XMEN III
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- M:I:III
- POSEIDON
- FAILURE TO LAUNCH
- REINCARNATION

SM CITY DASMARIÑAS
- XMEN III
- MANAY PO
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- BENCHWARMERS

SM CITY STA. MESA
- XMEN III
- CHAOS
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- BENCHWARMERS
- MANAY PO
- POSEIDON
- OVER THE HEDGE
- FAILURE TO LAUNCH
- M:I:III
- SILENT HILL

SM CITY MANILA
- XMEN III
- POSEIDON
- CHAOS
- M:I:III
- FAILURE TO LAUNCH
- XMEN III
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- REINCARNATION
- MANAY PO
- OVER THE HEDGE
- BENCH WARMERS
- ALL ABOUT LOVE

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
- XMEN III
- FAILURE TO LAUNCH
- CHAOS
- BENCHWARMERS
- MANAY PO
- ALL ABOUT LOVE

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
- XMEN III
- BENCHWARMERS
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- MANAY PO

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- XMEN III
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- M:I:III

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- MANAY PO
- XMEN III

SM CITY BACOOR
- POSEIDON
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- XMEN III
- MANAY PO
- M:I:III
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- BENCHWARMERS
- OVER THE HEDGE

LUZON

SM CITY BATANGAS
- XMEN III
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- BENCHWARMERS
- MANAY PO

SM CITY LUCENA
- XMEN II
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- MANAY PO
- SILENT HILL

SM CITY CLARK
- XMEN III
- XMEN III
- M:I:III
- MANAY PO
- BENCHWARMERS
- ALL ABOUT LOVE

SM CITY PAMPANGA
- XMEN III
- M:I:III
- BENCHWARMERS
- MANAY PO
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- ALL ABOUT LOVE

SM CITY MOLINO
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- XMEN III
- MANAY PO
- BENCHWARMERS

SM CITY STA. ROSA
- BENCHWARMERS
- MANAY PO
- XMEN III
- ALL ABOUT LOVE

SM CITY CEBU
- XMEN III
- BENCHWARMERS
- M:I:III
- POSEIDON
- MANAY PO
- AMERICAN SOLDIERS
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- XMEN III

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO
- BENCHWARMERS
- RESERVED
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- M:I:III
- MANAY PO
- XMEN III
- RESERVED
- BANDIDAS

SM CITY DAVAO
- XMEN III
- SILENT HILL
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- M:I:III
- MANAY PO
- BENCHWARMERS

SM CITY CAGAYAN
- M:I:III
- ALL ABOUT LOVE
- MANAY PO
- XMEN III

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ENTERTAINMENT

JUDY Ann Santos

Juday, Ryan will wed next year, says her mom

RUSHES

By Flash

JUDY ANN SANTOS AND RYAN AGONCILLO are set to marry next year, according to Juday's mom Carol. The couple are not going to "commercialize" the wedding—you know, sponsored this and that and exclusive network coverage, as is the custom for celeb nuptials in these parts.

But first they have two movies coming up! That's one for late this year, and another for early next.

Judge in a movie?

"Philippine Idol" judge Pilita Corrales is being cast in a Metro Manila Film Festival entry starring Lito Lapid. If she accepts, she will play pretty much herself—an Española. But *à la* Doña Victorina.

Aeta princess

The same movie is trying to cast Sarah Geronimo as an Aeta princess. Hasn't the girl done enough for a lifetime?

'Secret' breadwinner

A young, fairly popular, actress refuses to answer questions about her family and, necessarily, her humble beginnings. She doesn't want the world to know she's the breadwinner, but has agreed to guest in a talk show's episode on… breadwinners!

shiloh.com

LOS ANGELES—Angelina Jolie has reserved 24 domain names featuring various versions of her daughter Shiloh Nouvel's name. Internet registration files show that the Web addresses "shilohjolie," "shilohpitt," "shilohjoliepitt," "shilohnouveljolie," "shilohnouvelpitt" and "shilohnouveljoliepitt" — with the extensions ".com," ".org," ".net" and ".info"—were reserved as of May 27, the baby's birthday. *AFP*

'Sexiest man' available

LOS ANGELES—The "sexiest man alive" is available again.

Matthew McConaughey and Spanish beauty Penelope Cruz "have decided to split," Cruz spokesperson Robert Garlock told The Associated Press Friday. McConaughey's rep, Alan Nierob, confirmed the breakup, first reported by People magazine. *AP*

Hot bed

LOS ANGELES—Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise. Melanie Griffith and Antonio Banderas. Alec Baldwin and Kim Basinger. Penelope Cruz and Matthew McConaughey. Jen and Ben. Angelina and Brad.

High-profile pairings all and all share another thing: love bloomed on the set.

The latest addition to the list, Jennifer Aniston and Vince Vaughn—whose coupledom has been reported widely, though they refuse to officially confirm it—met while making "The Break-Up," opening in Manila in August. *AP*

Leo in HK

HONG KONG—Hollywood stars Leonardo DiCaprio and Matt Damon, who star in "The Departed"—a remake of the Hong Kong blockbuster "Infernal Affairs"—will visit the Chinese territory to promote the film, a news report said Saturday. The actors will be accompanied by the movie's director Martin Scorsese. The report did not say when they were expected. *AP*

Priscilla opens rehab

LOS ANGELES—Priscilla Presley planned to speak at the opening of a drug rehabilitation center in Michigan last Saturday. She was to help inaugurate the 120-bed Narconon Stone Hawk East residential center in Albion, Michigan. Her late husband, Elvis Presley, had persistent problems with pharmaceutical drugs. *AP*

3 for Ziyi

HONG KONG—Chinese actress Zhang Ziyi has signed on for three movies to be produced by Harvey Weinstein, including a film about Chinese folk heroine Hua Mulan and a remake of Japanese classic "The Seven Samurai," a news report said. Zhang confirmed she would star in the three movies when she met Weinstein at Cannes, the Chinese-language news Web site Sina.com said Friday. *AP*

'Cathartic' for Jen

LOS ANGELES— Speaking of "The Break-Up," Jennifer Aniston says she agreed to do it because "it was sort of like in a way, umm, a cathartic thing." She divorced Brad Pitt in October, after four and a half years of marriage.

PILITA Corrales

SARAH Geronimo

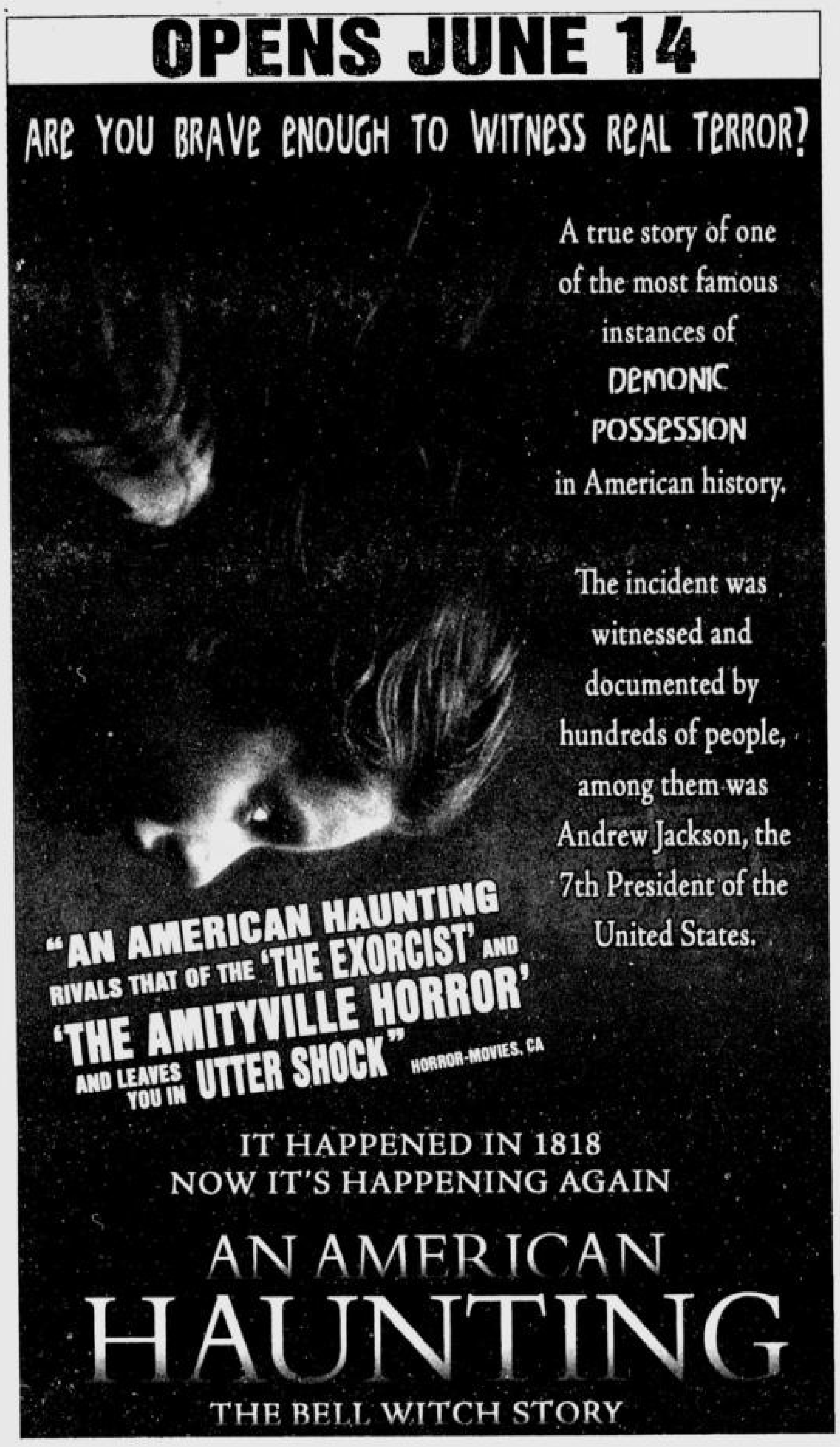
JENNIFER Aniston

NICOLE Kidman and Tom Cruise

JENNIFER Garner and Ben Affleck

PENELOPE Cruz and Matthew McConaughey

MELANIE Griffith and Antonio Banderas



OPENS JUNE 14

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE Monday, June 5, 2006

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5				National Geographic	V League				Sentro	How Clean Is Your House	ABC Action Movies				Big News	Fear Factor		Toloo TV	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Calla Lily	TV Patrol World		Bituing Walang Ningning	Sa Piling Mo	Pinoy Big Brother	My Girl	Wonderful Life	OK Fine! Whatever			Insider
AXN		Blackjack				Boarding Pass	E Buzz	Beastmaster (Season I)		Pensacola (Season III)		Sports Disaster IV		Numb3rs (Season 2)		Lost (Season II)		House	
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Codename: Kids Next Door	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Simpsons		Power Rangers Ninja Storm	PokeMon	Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel		The Simpsons		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One		Tondo Isla Pusong Bato				Nasaan Ka Man				Wait A Mint Kapeng Mainit				Forevermore				Saan Nagtatago Ang Pag-ibig	
Cinemax	The Eddy Duchin Story (2:35 PM)				Tigerman (4:40 PM)			Sunset (6:15 PM)				Urban Legends: Bloody Mary			For Better Or Worse			One False Move	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	World News Asia	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		What Should You Do?		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Mastermind	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Crossing Jordan		Bones		Cold Case	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Mickey Mouseworks	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven				Black Hole High	So Little Time	Kim Possible	Totally Spies		
ESPN		Pro Billiards Int'l BCA Open 9-Ball C'ships SFnl		Winter X-Games X - Day 1 Part 2			NBA Anthology	Watersports Programming Hot Water		Atlantic Coast Conf. Basketball Duke Vs Georgia Tech				Sportscenter Asia	LPGA Golf Shoprite LPGA Classic NJ, USA 3rd rd.				Sportscenter Asia
ETC		America's Next Top Model 4		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Project Runway		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		America's Next Top Model 4		ET Weekend	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	The Biggest Loser		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	Benediction And Devotion	Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus	Bible Treasure Chest	Image Of God	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	G.K. Chesterton: The Apostle Of Common Sense II	Threshold Of Hope		Sunday Night With (Encore) Fr. Benedict Groeschel		Daily Mass Live		Holy Land Rosary Angelus	Good Or Evil, Who Decides?	The Gospel Of John	Freedom & Authority	Catholic Compass	
Fox News		Beltway Boys	Fox News Watch	Bulls & Bears	Cavuto On Business	Forbes On Fox	Cashin' In	Fox & Friends						Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat (2:45 PM)	Now and Forever (3:15 PM)	Endless Love 1: Autumn In My Heart By Popular Demand		Sayuki	Dragonball Z	Gokusen	24 Oras		Captain Barbell	Majika	I Luv NY	Love Of The Condor Heroes	Jewel In The Palace		Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		Child Of Our Time (3:15 PM)		Riding The Bus With My Sister				Bewitched	The Nanny	Judging Amy		Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye III		Judging Amy		To The Ends Of The Earth			Judging Amy (11:45 PM)
HBO			Footloose			Neil Simon's The Goodbye Girl (5:15 PM)				Innerspace				Bobby Jones Stroke Of Genius				Wolf (11:05 PM)	
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Gamburagar	Gosaurer	Raijin-Oh	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mirmo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Gosaurer
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Kusada Kontra Namen		Japan Video Topics/ Ama		ME TV		PTA Best Of The Philippines		Global Family Series: Ama	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	Jack Yard	The Late Show With David Letterman		Bottomline		Afterburn		X-Men Evolution	Beat The Geeks	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Family Guy	The Late Show With David Letterman		Jack In The Box			
Lifestyle Network	Get Color	30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	Smart Solutions	Sensible Chic	Decorating Cents	Barefoot Contessa	Everyday Italian	Hot Off The Grill	E! Extra Celebrity Adventures		NY Fashion Week	Martha		Radical Sabbatical	Genuine Article	Good Finds	Style Star
MTV Philippines		Wildboyz		MTV Hits	Pop Inc.		MTV Hits (with Sms)			Hanging Out In Boracay	Homecoming	MTV Hits	Making the Vid: Nelly Furtado Maneater	TRL		Wildboyz		MTV Hits	Brand New
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYXLOG	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mobile MYX		Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXLOG
National Geographic	Wildlife Diary	National Geographic Specials		Naked Science		The Living Edens		Top 5 - World of Reptiles		WOW! Thunder Beasts		About Asia		National Geographic Specials					
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Alsp			Dyos Ko, Mahal Ko Ba Siya?	Teledyaryo W/ Rey Langit & Angelique Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition		Dial M		Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Hindi Mo Ako Kayang Tapakan				Karugtong Ng Kahapon				Markang Bungo 2				Minsan Pa Ang Batang Rebelde				Venus (Diosa ng Kagandahan)
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Scrapped Princess	Kaleido Star	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Magic Ring	Irene	Noel	Project 11	H2O (Hanggang... Over)		News On Q	Lipa Ng Kabataan		Irene	Over The Green Fields
RPN 9						Global Window	RPN Alayon News	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Scare Tactics	NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	Just For Laughs	Cargo For Truth	
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		Quantum Global		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports				World Table Tennis C'ships SFinals		GWS 22-2006	2006 ABAG ATP WTC Day 2 Men's Single			Sagupaan		2000 NBA Play-offs Flyers @ Pacers ECF Game 7					Solar Sports Desk	2006 Hitachi Asian Women's Club	
Sports Plus				World Game		French Open '06 Day 6 Highlights		French Open '06 Day 9 16th rd.											
Star Movies		The Dead (3:15 PM)				Sneakers				Godfather (7:10 PM)				The Bridge Of San Luis Rey				Lava	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Ed		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	My Wife And Kids	Still Standing	You Decide (Series 4)	Frasier	Monk		Seinfeld	My Wife And Kids
Studio 23	Bewitched	YuGi-Oh 3 & 4				Batman Beyond	Dragon Booster	Spirits	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	The Bachelor Season 6		Charmed (8:20 PM)	Lost (9:10 PM)		News Central	Max Match		Travel Time

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Finance disputes tax perks to Globe, Smart

Says 3G investments will be made even without incentives

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE HAS QUESTIONED THE prudence of granting tax perks to industry giants Globe Telecom Inc. and Smart Communications Inc. for their investments in 3G technology.

A ranking Finance official said tax breaks related to investments in 3G technology were the best example of "redundant" fiscal incentives because Globe and Smart were expected to have made the investments anyway even without the perks.

"I don't know why they gave the incentives. We will go to 3G no matter what because it is the way of the future," the official pointed out, adding that Smart and Globe would have made the investments even for the sole reason of marketability of the 3G technology.

The Board of Investments (BOI), the agency tasked with approving fiscal incentives, granted various perks to Smart and Globe for their investments in 3G technology. The incentives included duty-free importation of capital goods and income tax holiday for six years.

The government, which is grappling with huge budget deficits, is estimated to lose billions of pesos in potential revenue collection because of the granting of fiscal incentives to to the profitable telecom companies.

FINANCE/ B4

Cebu Pac cuts fares by up to 43%

By Daxim L. Lucas

BUDGET AIRLINE Cebu Pacific Air Inc. has further reduced its fare discount scheme for early bookings, cutting prices by almost half in a bid to draw in more flyers during the off-peak season.

At the same time, the Gokongwei-owned airline said that it was set to receive two more Airbus A319 single-aisle aircraft as part of a refleeting program that has so far boosted its seat capacity by 40 percent.

"It's all about making travel more affordable so that more Filipinos can fly," Cebu Pacific president and CEO Lance Gokongwei said in a statement. "We are taking delivery of our seventh and eighth Airbus aircraft this week and we are more than halfway through with our refleeting program."

He added that by August, the airline would have an all-Airbus fleet—having retired its old DC-9 aircraft--which will also be the youngest fleet in the country.

"We will have increased our capacity by more than 40 percent," he said. "This means that we will have more seats to offer even at lower fares."

The additional capacity coming on stream this week prompted the airline to reduce fares further.

The "permanent" Go fare program is part of the airline's strategy of selling seats to local destinations below cost to build up economies of scale.

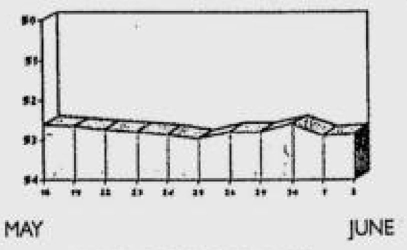
Cebu Pacific said the price cut of up to 43 percent for some domestic destinations were made available starting last Friday, June 2.

"The lowest Go fare to any Visayas destination is now P568 one-way, while the lowest Go fare to any Mindanao destination is

CEBU/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



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Dull trading seen

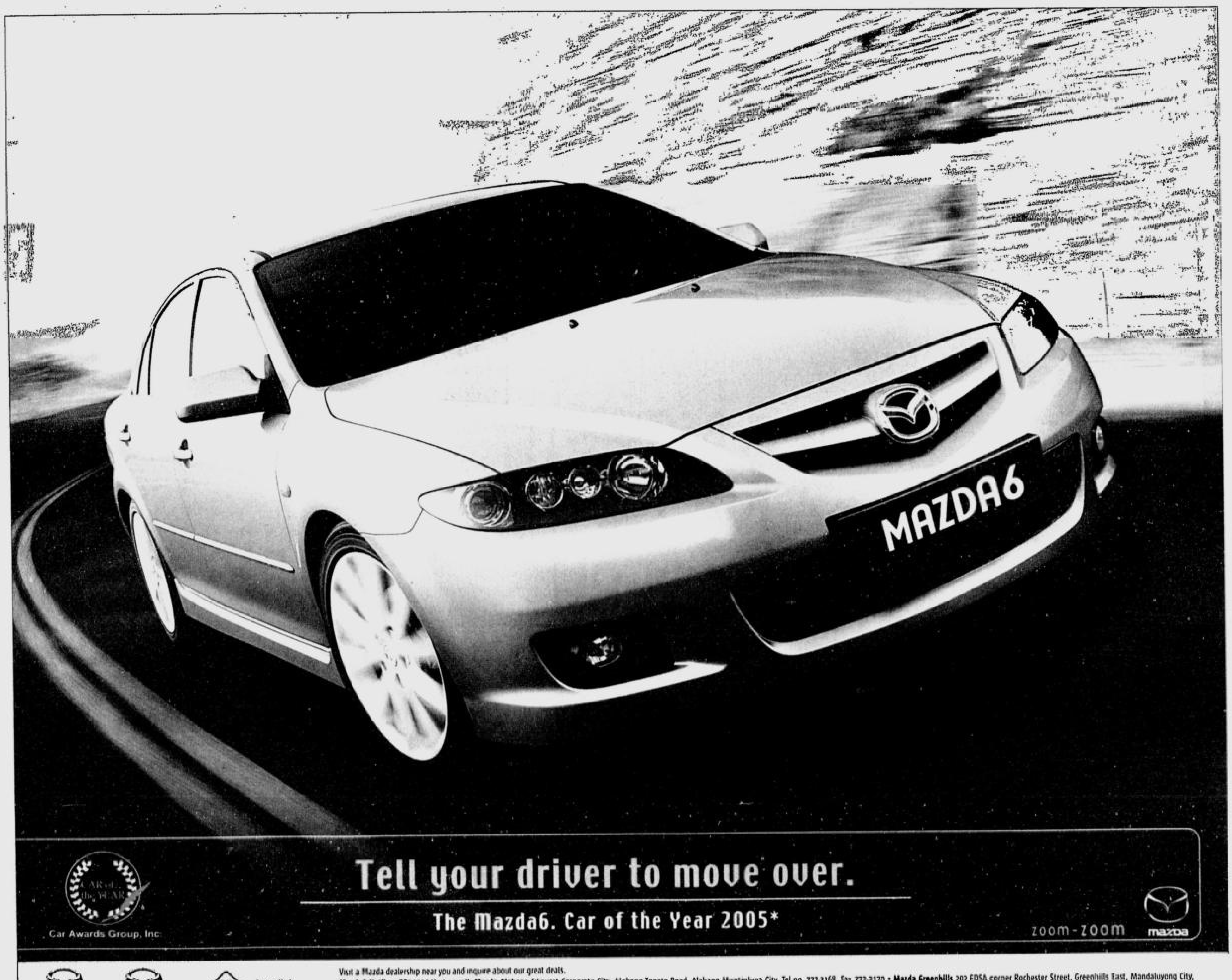
STOCK ANALYSTS ARE DIVIDED AS TO where stocks are headed this week given jitters over a possible interest rate increase.

Fitzgerald Aclan, head of research and strategy at BDO Trust, said there could be windows for bargain hunting if the US market picked up Friday.

AB Capital Securities said that while corporate long-term fundamentals remained solid, the macro-economic picture has been mixed with market players worried about higher interest rates and rising inflation.

"Despite some favorable developments in Iran, crude oil has remained above $70 a barrel as we enter into the hurricane season in the US. Meanwhile, there is growing pressure on domestic interest rates as in-

DULL/ B6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BIR wants 2007 target reduced

By Michelle V. Remo

AFTER REQUESTING FOR A much lower target for 2006, the Bureau of Internal Revenue has made a formal request that its tax-collection goal for next year be reduced as well, stressing that the government's system of setting targets was flawed.

Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag proposed that instead of being assigned a tax collection goal of P793 billion, his office should be asked to collect only P661.5 billion in taxes next year. His proposal reflects a 17-percent reduction from the program.

"There are several things fatally wrong with the way the BIR annual target is set at the moment, which we should discuss," Buñag said in a letter to Finance Secretary Margarito Teves.

Buñag, who was earlier asked to resign by Rep. Joey Salceda for the BIR's collection shortfall in April, said his proposed target for 2007 assumed a 10-percent growth from the BIR's likely tax collection this year.

He said the BIR could potentially collect P601.4 billion this year, 11-percent lower than the official target of P675 billion.

Buñag earlier asked the Department of Finance, head agency of the BIR, to cut its 2006 target to P601.4 billion, but the DOF thumbed the request down.

The country's chief tax collector cited the move of the Bureau of the Treasury to substantially reduce the volume of government securities being issued, saying this would slash the BIR's collection of documentary stamp tax on treasury bills and bonds.

Buñag also said that P27 billion of the BIR's target this year should be transferred to the Bureau of Customs to represent value-added tax on oil because of the huge volume of oil imports. The BOC collects VAT on imported oil, while the BIR charges VAT on domestically produced or processed petroleum products.

Representatives from the BIR and the DOF are scheduled to meet this morning to discuss the request of the former to have a lower tax collection target for next year.

Earlier, Teves said the DOF did not find any reason, at least for now, to adjust the BIR's target.

No surprise after all

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

AS ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNMENT last week, domestic production of goods and services (GDP) grew by 5.5 percent in the first quarter of this year, while production by Filipinos, regardless of where they are (GNP), grew by 5.8 percent.

This is good news if taken to represent achievement of the upper end of the government's revised target GDP growth range of 5-5.5 percent. But it has been pointed out, not the least by Malacañang's reputed top economic adviser in Congress, that the target had already been substantially reduced from the original 6.3-7.3 percent embodied in the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP).

If we add the fact that the actual growth performance is among the weakest, if not the weakest in the region, the latest growth statistics become more a cause for concern rather than elation.

Proper assessment

Beyond the aggregate numbers, it is the quality of the growth that we ought to care about, more than the overall growth rate itself.

That is, was the growth evenly spread throughout the various production sectors, thereby leading to widespread benefits for Filipinos, or was it confined to a select few? Did the growth lead to a commensurate growth in the number of jobs for Filipino workers?

The other interesting question, particularly for investors, is whether the numbers indicate that the economy is picking up or slowing down. In judging this, should we compare current performance with that of a year ago, or with that of the immediate past quarter?

It is customary for our official reports to highlight the quarterly performance against that of the same quarter last year. But in the United States and many other countries, the economic growth figure that is announced is the annualized quarter-to-quarter growth rate, after correcting for recurrent seasonal variations. Trend-watchers find it more interesting to look at this quarter-to-quarter growth rate, as it gives a better indication of the current momentum (or lack of it) in the economy.

Growth composition

Taken in the above light, how does the first quarter performance stack up? The full report issued by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) is quite transparent, and gives all the necessary details.

The 5.8-percent growth in GNP posted in the first quarter adds up as follows: 2.7 percent was contributed by services, 1.6 percent came from industry, 0.7 percent from agriculture, fishery and forestry and 0.7 percent from net factor income from abroad (mostly remittances).

The services sector accounts for almost half (16 million) of the jobs in the economy, led by wholesale and retail trade (with more than 6 million jobs) and transport, storage and communication (about 2.5 million jobs).

It is therefore a good sign that half of the growth in the economy comes from the sector that employs half of all working Filipinos.

But the continuing challenge is that a very minor part of the entire economy's growth is coming from the sector that directly employs more than 12 million Filipinos, or close to 40 percent of our workers—agriculture, fishery and forestry.

We need to be able to invigorate this sector even more if the benefits of growth are to be more widely felt.

Slowdown and decline

On a trend basis, the first quarter year-on-year growth rate of 5.5 percent improves on the corresponding 4.2-percent figure posted last year. That is good news.

But there is more bad news. Compared with the immediately preceding quarter, the domestic economy actually slowed down.

From a 1.4-percent seasonally adjusted quarter-to-quarter GDP growth rate in the fourth quarter of 2005, it is now down to just 0.9 percent. Worse, GNP did not just slow down; it actually fell by 0.9 percent from the previous quarter.

This implies that remittances for the quarter actually dropped, even after correcting for the seasonal surge that marks the last quarter of every year.

Furthermore, services slowed down from a 7-percent growth last year to 6.2 percent this year. The main cause is the dramatic slowdown in transport, storage and communication (10.7 down to 6.8 percent), with transport actually falling.

Clearly, the steep oil price increases led people to travel less, and reduced the movement of goods as well.

Vindication

Of interest to many was the revision in the fourth-quarter growth figures that came with the release of the first quarter data. As expected by many, the final GDP growth figure for the last quarter of last year was not as impressive as first announced; it turns out to have been 5.3 percent, not 6.1 percent as announced in January. This means that the full-year GDP growth actually fell short of 5 percent. GNP had grown by 6.9 percent, not 7.1 percent as previously announced.

While no one should be happy about a lower growth rate, the revision vindicates economic analysts, including ourselves in the Ateneo Center for Economic Research and Development (ACERD), most of whom had projected that the economy would grow below 5 percent on a full-year basis in 2005.

Our Ateneo Macroeconomic Forecasting Model (AMFM) remains reliable after all. And what was earlier described as a "surprising" performance of the economy in the final quarter of 2005 turns out not to have been that surprising after all.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

Cebu Pac cuts fares by up to 43%

From page B1

P868 one-way," the airline said.

It emphasized that Go fares were permanent and not a temporary promotion like to its earlier P10 and P1 airfare schemes.

To get the discounts, however, clients must book and pay for their flights at least one month in advance.

Manila to Cebu or any Visayas destination will henceforth cost only P568 one-way from the old rate of P888, representing a 36-percent cut, exclusive of charges.

Manila to Davao or any Mindanao destination will now cost only P868 one-way, reduced from P1,250 or a cut of more than 30 percent. Cebu to Davao or any other inter-island sector now costs only P568 one-way, reduced from P998 or by 43 percent.

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SEMINAR ROOM A (FREE ADMISSION)
JUNE 21, 2006
1:00 - 3:00 pm Best Energy Management Practices for Steam Systems, Spirax Sarco Phils.
3:30 - 5:30 pm CO2 Refrigerant for Industrial Refrigeration Seminar
Engr. Cesar Luis Lim
JUNE 22, 2006
10:00 am - 12:00 nn Industrial Refrigeration Seminar with Emphasis on liquid Overfeed System, Engr. Cesar Luis Lim
12:30 - 2:30 pm Savings Using Variable Frequency Drives, Jupp & Company
3:00 - 6:00 pm Thermal Energy Storage Systems Seminar, Engr. Cesar Luis Lim
JUNE 23, 2006
12:30 - 2:30 pm Hydrocracked Lubricant Technology, Engr. Johnson Lim, Mechatronics
2:30 - 4:00 pm Product Presentation, Schneider Electric Philippines, Inc.
4:00 - 6:00 pm Product Presentation, Lontech Systems Industries, Inc.

ASHRAE SEMINAR ROOM B (A Special Seminar Series conducted in partnership with the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating & Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE)) (PhP500 PER TOPIC)
JUNE 21, 2006
1:00 - 5:30 pm Air-Conditioning Cooling Load, Engr. Rosendo C. Perez, Jr.
JUNE 22, 2006
10:00 am - 12:00 nn Air Conditioning Equipment Selection, Engr. Luci Limson, Concepcion Carrier
12:30 - 6:00 pm Psychrometrics, Engr. Rosendo C. Perez, Jr.
JUNE 23, 2006
10:00 - 12:00 nn Pumps, AMEIN
12:30 - 5:00 pm Fans & Blowers, Design and Construction, Engr. Jason Tan, Niagara Industrial Equipment Corp.

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COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

NOT ONLY DID HE discard his own department's advice, but Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo also ignored the legal advisory the DFA had sought from the Department of Justice when he terminated an ongoing P1-billion digital passport project.

Strangely, Romulo also ignored the written opinion of Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, a copy of which we also have, whose views he had sought on the very same issue.

Despite the project proponent already having completed phase 1 and sunk P304 million, Romulo terminated the build-operate-transfer contract allegedly because the project proponents, BCA International and the US IT company, Unisys, had inadequate capitalization.

According to DFA documents, Romulo objected to the entry of a Thai investor, despite the favorable opinion earlier rendered by Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Franklin Ebdalin that a foreign group may be allowed up to 49-percent equity in the BOT company.

Ironically, Ebdalin was virtually forced to disown his recommendation after Romulo ordered him to scuttle the project.

To protect himself from any criminal or civil liability, Ebdalin not only signed the termination order "upon instruction of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs," but also subsequently submitted the equivalent of a get-out-of-jail memo by telling his boss that the DFA action "was not in accordance with … the amended BOT Agreement."

Because of the apparently insurmountable opposition from Romulo himself, the project proponent, BCA International, is now entertaining a takeover offer from the "Star Paper Corp.," ironically the same passport paper supplier whose longstanding contract with the Bangko Sentral stands to be lost when the BOT project starts producing digital-ready passports.

By the way, Romulo's proposition is that the Bangko Sentral should take over the digital-passport project.

Bigger bang at Alabang

FOR writing about the impending water rate increase in Ayala Alabang, Ayala Land on Saturday wrote back to say the rates that we had quoted

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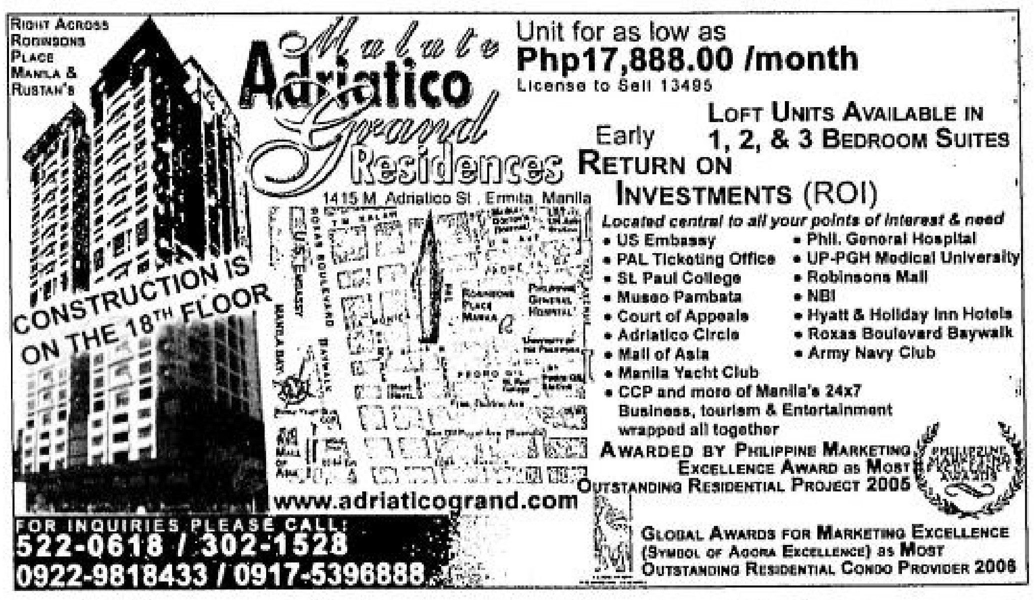
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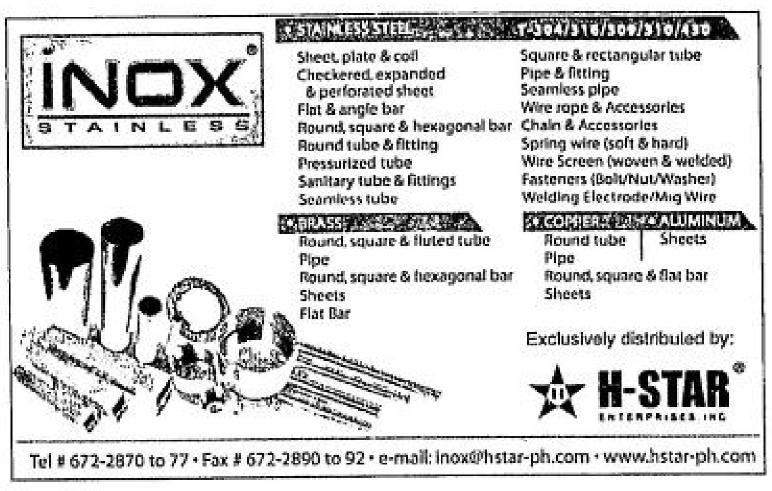
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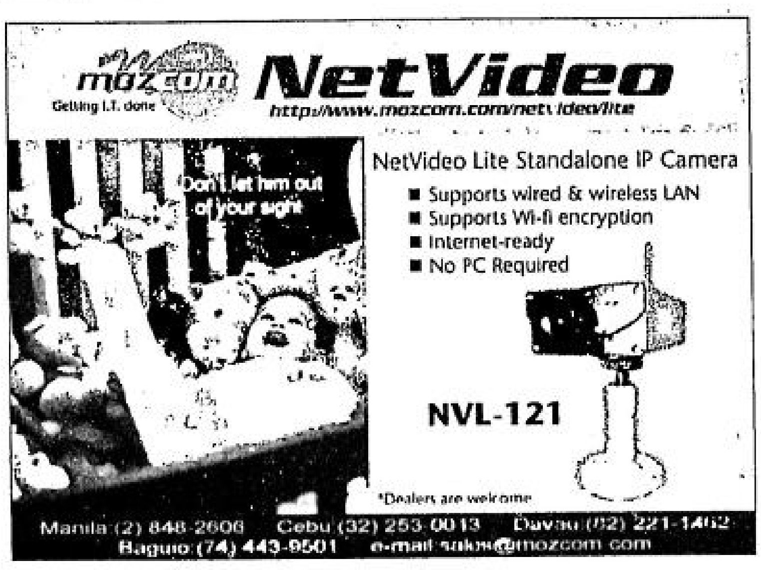
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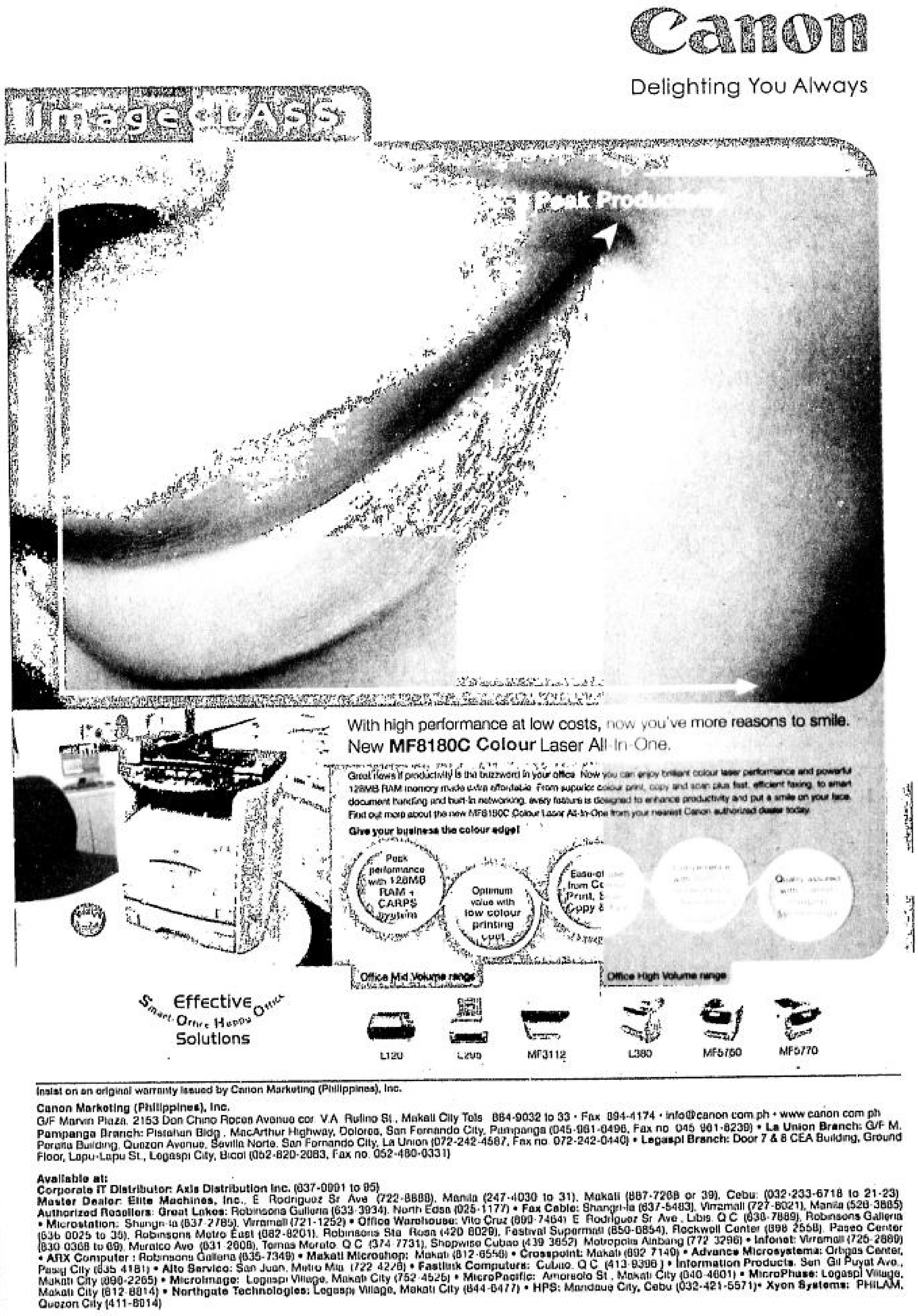
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Exports of coco-based products up 33.6%

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TOTAL EXPORTS OF COCONUT-based products went up by 33.6 percent in the first quarter as March volumes grew 83.5 percent, according to an industry report.

Data from the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines showed that exporters shipped out during the quarter a total of 472,943 metric tons in copra equivalent from 354,122 MT in the same period last year.

Coconut oil exports, which grew by 43.5 percent to 256,230 MT, accounted for 54 percent of the shipments during the period.

Copra meal export increased 67 percent to 112,498 MT, while oleochemicals grew by 26 percent to 30,304 MT in copra terms. However, exports of desiccated or dehydrated coconut shrank by 23 percent to 23,178 MT.

Also, Ucap said March volumes shot up to 201,601 MT in copra terms from 109,865 MT in the same month of 2004 as the average growth for most of the categories reached triple figures.

Coconut oil exports reached 112,887 MT in March or 97 percent higher than year-ago's 57,281 MT.

Copra meal volumes went up 87 percent to 35,173 MT and oleochemicals increased 147 percent to 8,167 MT in copra terms.

The only loser in March was desiccated coconut, which suffered an 8.9-percent drop in exports to 9,216 MT.

Rice production seen hitting all-time high of 15.2M MT

Good harvests help improve farmers' earnings

By Christine A. Gaylican

AT THE RATE farm output is increasing, self-sufficiency in rice may now be within reach.

THE COUNTRY'S RICE PRODUCTION WOULD likely hit an all-time high of 15.2 million metric tons this year if the growth rates posted in the first six months would be sustained in the second semester of the year.

This level of production, according to agriculture officials, will enable the country to cut down its rice imports by at least 60,000 metric tons this year.

The farm sector is seen to post higher production growth rates by the end of the year given the favorable weather condition, better irrigation support and quality seeds, said Agriculture Assistant Secretary and Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS) Director Romeo Recide in an interview.

BAS records showed that in the first quarter, a 7-percent growth in rice production to 3.6 million metric tons was recorded. In the second quarter, production increased by 9.6 percent to 2.9 million metric tons. Production is expected to increase by 16 percent in the third quarter. Fourth quarter production is expected to contribute the bulk of 40 percent to the total, Recide said.

The good harvests in the past months helped improve the farm gate prices of *palay* to a range of P12 to P13.50 per kilo from the previous level of P9 to P10 per kilo, National Food Authority Administrator Gregorio Tan said.

Tan noted that NFA's recent *palay* procurement level had been low as farmers opted to sell their produce to private traders who offered attractive prices.

The positive rice yields, he added, possibly pared down rice imports from 1.84 million metric tons last year to possibly 1.74 million metric tons this year.

The ballooning Philippine population puts more pressure on the country's food supply, with the average daily rice requirement of the country hitting 31,000 metric tons, he explained.

The agency, he said, had to resort to importation to meet the rising demand for the staple.

"Even if we become self-sufficient in rice this year, we will have to continue importing for our buffer," he added.

Finance disputes tax . . .

From page B1

Globe alone is estimated to save P2.5 billion in tax and duty payments because of the incentives.

"Eventually, bulk of the income of Smart and Globe will come from 3G. Because of the incentives, the government would not be able to collect income taxes from them for six years," the DOF official said.

He said the foregone revenues would have potentially funded projects that would improve the country's infrastructure or enhance basic services.

The BOI earlier said the tax perks were granted to the telecom giants because of the huge investments involved in the operation of 3G services. Smart's 3G project was reported to cost P33.18 billion, while that of Globe was estimated to reach P5.48 billion.

The investments are expected to result in hundreds of additional jobs, with Smart planning to hire 107 new employees to implement the 3G technology project.

3G technology will allow mobile phone users a quicker way of accessing the Internet using their handy communication gadgets.

Equitable PCIB to jack up capital by ₱1B

By Doris C. Dumlao

EQUITABLE PCI BANK, THE COUNTRY'S third biggest lender, will raise its capital by P1 billion using dividends from subsidiaries, said EPCIBank vice chair Winston Garcia, president of the Government Service Insurance System.

Garcia told reporters he did not favor a capital call to cover the bank's shortfall in capital versus risk assets.

"The capital deficiency is only around P1 billion. We can recover that by dividends from subsidiary corporation," he said.

As of the first quarter, EPCIBank was capitalized at P44.5 billion. Garcia has long been opposing proposals for a capital call, which will force existing shareholders like the GSIS to shell out more money to prevent the dilution of their stake. The GSIS, which has decided to hold on to its shares rather than sell out below its acquisition cost of P92, is optimistic on the bank's prospects.

"I'm confident with the way management is running the bank. I'm confident that our shares of stock will reach greater heights. Before, I'm only contended in recovering cost. Now I'm aiming to get a profit," he said.

A merger proposal from Banco de Oro Universal Bank has been shelved.

"Our exercise has proven that the P56 (price per share) offer of BDO was really low. They (Sy group) have offered me even something higher," Garcia said.

DFNN posts ₱25M in Q1 profit

TECHNOLOGY SERVICES FIRM DIVERSIFIED Financial Network Inc. (DFNN) said it posted a profit of P25 million in the first quarter, reversing the loss of P14 million in the same quarter last year.

DFNN, in a financial report to the Philippine Stock Exchange, said its revenue surged 268 percent to P66.6 million in the first three months.

The company said its performance was boosted by services fees from its units. Foreign bookings from Intelligent Wave increased to P16.3 million. Also, it said that DFNN.com International, its foreign unit in Singapore, recorded a one-time gain.

DFNN owns 100 percent of application software developer and Internet services firm DFNN.Com.

It also owns 75 percent of technology-oriented learning center operator HatchAsia which, in turn, holds a 56-percent stake in turn-key solutions provider Intelligent Wave Philippines, Inc. (IWI).

DFNN develops, operates and maintains web-based and wireless applications for major corporate customers. It also provides proprietary order routing software technology to stock brokerage firms and web-advertising services. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Undiplomatic maneuvers

From page B3

in the May 24 column were "misleading."

Strange reaction, since the quoted figures came unadulterated from the National Water Resources Board, which is calling for a public hearing on the higher rate petition.

"We wish to assure the residents of AAV (Ayala Alabang Village) that Agustin's information is misleading, and we understand the concern it may have raised," wrote Raul Irlanda, president of the Ayala Land subsidiary, Ayala Property Management Corp.

Well, it was actually the residents of Ayala Alabang, a number of whom are retired Ayala executives, who approached Cocktales and provided the initial documentation.

Since Ayala Land has chosen to publicly debate this issue, maybe it should also start explaining to Rizal and Laguna fishermen and residents how much longer the high-end subdivision would continue pumping water out of the Laguna de Bay just to water the subdivision's golf course.

Math-challenged engineers

IT seems that the Makati City Engineer's Office needs a math refresher course badly.

The 38-storey BSA Tower condominium fronting Greenbelt has a total floor area of 17,733.20 square meters, yet the city engineers counted the parking and common areas to a whopping 12,186,678 sqm, enough to build 687 buildings of the same size.

Because of the erroneous computation, the residents are now being assessed by City Hall for P177.9 million in property taxes just for the parking/common areas alone.

Heard through the grapevine

ACCRA has suffered a series of legal setbacks on behalf of its client, Daikin Industries, after the Court of Appeals again ruled that no less than the Supreme Court disallows the splitting of proceedings and multiplicity of suits, as Accra's legal strategy for Daikin had sought for, starting at the Regional Trial Court level.

The Japanese company is being accused by its local venture partner, Alen Air, of sabotaging the partnership when it allowed another trading company to sell imported Daikin airconditioners cheaper than the ones supplied by Daikin and assembled locally by Daikin-Alen Air.

(E-mail: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

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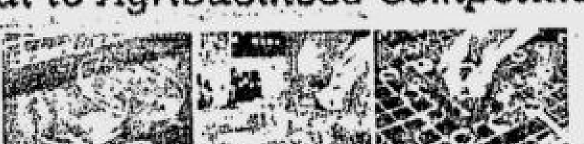

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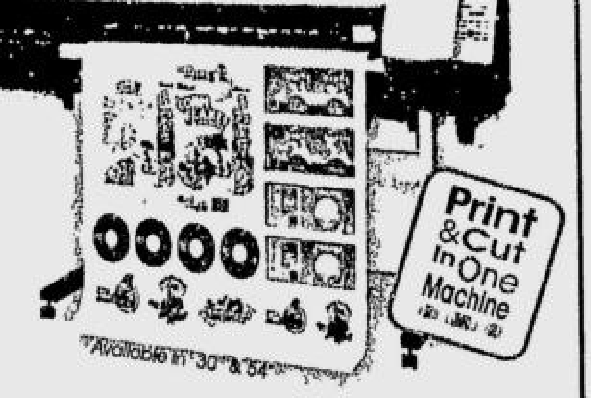

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LIST OF PROPERTIES (APR.-JUN. 2006)

1. Residential vacant lot Lot 28, Blk. 1, Citation Homes, Brgy. Bahay Pare, Meycauayan, Bulacan 198 sq.m. - PHP 725,000.00
2. Res'l./Agri Imprvt. of no value Lot 523, Bo. Calmon, Sta. Maria Bulacan 3430 sq.m - PHP 2,445,500.00
3. Res'l /comm'l. vacant lot Lot 1251-B-3, Rizal St., San Jose, Baliuag, Bulacan 1350 sq.m - PHP 5,400,000.00
4. Residential with Imprv'ts. No. 88 National Highway, within Brgy. Manga, Candaba, Pampanga 646 sq.m. - PHP 9,811,000.00
5. Residential House & Lot Bulak St. Bo. Malhacan, Meycauayan, Bulacan 466 sq.m. - PHP 3,493,000.00
6. Raw land Lot 28, Bo. Encalo, Angat, Bulacan 639 sq.m. - PHP 111,850.00
7. Residential Lot 6 & 8 Caballero St., Green Plains Subd., Calumpit Bulacan 478 sq.m - PHP 1,816,000.00
8. Industrial compound Lot 3927-B-1, Brgy. Loma de Gato, Marilao, Bulacan 18350 sq.m. - PHP 28,893,000.00
9. Residential vacant lot Lot 13, Blk. 5 Tahimik St., Fulville Subd., Tabang, Guiguinto, Bulacan 369 sq.m. - PHP 923,000.00
10. Res'l./Comm'l. vacant lot Lot 4-B-5-B-1, Brgy. Duquit, Mabalacat, Pampanga 8544 sq.m. - PHP 29,004,000.00
11. Residential vacant lots Rivera Street, Marisol Subd., Brgy. Ninoy Aquino, Angeles City 225 to 249 sq.m. - PHP 157,500.00 to PHP 174,300.00 2726 sq.m - PHP 1,908,200.00
12. Residential House & Lot Barrio Mapalad, Arayat, Pampanga 240 sq.m. - PHP 382,000.00
13. Residential w/ imprvt #25 Sct. Borromeo cor. Sct. Tuazon, Diliman, Quezon City 1391.3 sq.m. - PHP 36,633,000.00
14. Residential w/ imprvt #12 Benton Street, Lagro Subd., Quezon City 300 sq.m. - PHP 1,693,000.00
15. Residential House & Lot #46 Luz St., Brgy. San Bartolome, Novaliches, Quezon City 215 sq.m. - PHP 900,000.00
16. Office space condominium 5- units 16th Floor, Unit A, B, I, J, & K, IBM Plaza Bldg., Eastwood Cyberpark City, E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave., Quezon City
    - A - 166.40 sq.m - PHP 9,984,000.00
    - B - 118.20 sq.m - PHP 7,092,000.00
    - I - 115.70 sq.m - PHP 6,942,000.00
    - J - 107.20 sq.m. - PHP 6,432,000.00
    - K - 109.40 sq.m. - PHP 6,564,000.00

    Office space condominium whole - 17th Flr.
    17th floor IBM Plaza Bldg., Eastwood Cyberpark City, E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave., Quezon City 1330 sq.m - PHP 79,800,000.00
17. Condo unit Unit 602, 6th fr. Elizabeth Mansion Condo, #154 N. Domingo St., Brgy. Kaunlaran, Cubao, Quezon City 140 sq.m. - PHP3,150,000.00

For inquiries, please call: 812-0000 loc. 2200/2319 or Dennis Alaoria (8116647); or the ff: Malolos Branch (044) 791-0342; Baliuag Branch (044) 766-2022; Pampanga Branches (045) 961-1624/ (045) 625-5586. Text: Bkcom<pmg your name><your landline><your email add>send to 2327 for Globe or 09178902327 for non-Globe users. Email:mtuason@bankcom.com.ph

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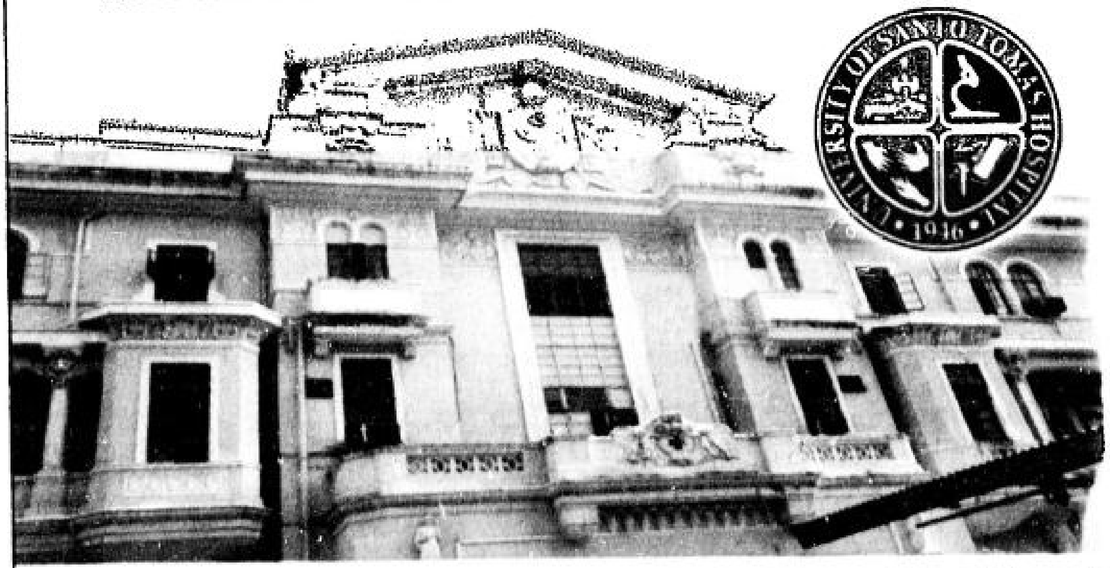

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GMA 7 defers IPO to early '07

Says network not in a rush to raise funds

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

TELEVISION GIANT GMA NETWORK INC. IS putting off its proposed maiden offering until the first quarter of 2007, saying it was not in a rush to raise fresh capital this year, company chair Felipe Gozon said.

GMA 7 earlier planned on an initial public offering in July.

However, Gozon said the network was also considering the financial climate after the recent fallout in global stock markets.

"It's not (because of) a shareholder matter nor is it because of new accounting standards. We don't want to be pressured into listing. We don't need to raise new funds right away because we don't have any (outstanding) obligations," Gozon said.

Gozon said there were a number of initiatives the company wanted done this year to enhance the company's value.

He said GMA 7 was in talks with US media giant Time Warner to carry the network's programs in the East and West coasts.

"We are deeply in negotiations with Time Warner," Gozon said. Aside from the United States, GMA 7 is also studying possible distribution partnerships in Canada.

For its international as well as local expansion this year, Gozon said the network was setting aside P1 billion.

GMA 7 is also sticking to its net income target this year of P2 billion, almost the same as its profit goal in 2005.

The network prepaid the balance of its five-year, long-term loan of P1.9 billion in February last year, nine months ahead of the scheduled due date of November. Primarily using internally generated funds, GMA 7 paid more than P543 million in principal and interest.

In terms of its regional expansion, the company has upgraded its transmitter and other technical facilities in Cebu and Davao and has installed a transmitter in Bacolod. More improvements would also be implemented in other key cities in the country, the company said.

GMA Pinoy TV, which was launched in the United States, Japan, Guam and Malaysia last year and the Middle East and Cerritos, California, this year, continues to increase its subscriber base. As of last March, GMA Pinoy TV already had more than 80,000 subscribers.

Since its launch in November 2005, subsidiary QTV Channel 11 has also maintained its hold on the number three spot in ratings.

Brokers not keen on selling stocks

AN OFFER FROM HONG KONG INVESTMENT management firm Value Partners Ltd. to buy shares of the Philippine Stock Exchange has elicited lukewarm response from stockbrokers, sources said.

VPL has offered to buy up to 5 percent or P155.4 million worth of PSE shares. It would help boost PSE efforts to become a fully demutualized company.

Demutualization will convert the bourse from a company controlled by stockbrokers to one widely owned by various stockholders.

So far, brokers holding a paltry 88,000 shares were willing to unload, sources said.

PSE closed at P210 last Friday. Another group of brokers owning an estimated 100,000 shares was reportedly also interested to sell its shares to the Hong Kong group.

PSE management will ask brokers to sign a letter of interest indicating the price at which they are willing to unload and the number of shares involved.

Sources estimated the PSE's indicative price was between P200 and P300 a share. At P200 a share, the PSE is trading at 26 times earnings based on last year's net income, which is at a discount to other bourses in the Asian region.

VPL, founded in 1993, manages more than $3 billion in funds from individual and institutional investors and focuses on "great-but-under appreciated" Asian businesses. It owns 8,340 PSE shares, acquired through small purchases in the open market.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Dull ...

From page B1

dications point toward some disappointments in the government's tax collection efforts," AB Capital Securities said.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) earlier said the government's P675-billion tax collection target was too high. The BIR failed to achieve its monthly target for April but a surplus of P17.6 billion was still achieved due to increased collections from the Bureau of the Treasury, dividends from state-owned firms and lower expenses.

Mildly easing worries, the Bangko Sentral last week kept its key interest rates unchanged.

The market's blue chip index, PSEi, hardly budged last week, rising a mere 3.78 points to 2,304.17.

"The market was actually saved by foreign buying last Wednesday across most blue chips but the upside was capped given no follow-through buying after reports of a lower-than-expected economic growth and the continued weakness of the peso," AB Capital Securities noted.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of June 1, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.7	6.1	5.7	6	70,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	36	36.5	35.5	36.5	162,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	54	54.5	53	54.5	1,182,800
China Banking Corp.	880	880	875	875	6,970
Citystate Savings Bank	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	400
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	6,570,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	74	74	72	72.5	400,000
International Exch. Bank	40	40.5	40	40.5	22,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	36	36	35	36	499,400
Philippine National Bank	34	34	34	34	34,200
Phil. Savings Bank	39.5	39.5	39.5	39.5	10,500
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	16.25	18.25	16.25	18.25	172,000
Security Bank Corp.	49	51.5	49	50.5	591,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	48	50	48	48.5	67,600
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
First Metro Invest. Corp	31.5	31.5	30.5	31.5	10,500
Manulife Financial Corp.	1850	1850	1850	1850	620
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	210	210	210	210	93,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2110	2110	2100	2100	100
Ivantage Corp	1.26	1.32	1.26	1.3	8,172,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp	47	47	46.5	47	6,300
First Phil Hldgs Corp	46.5	47	45.5	45.5	184,600
Manila Electric Co. A	15.5	15.5	15	15	98,600
Manila Electric Co. B	23.5	23.75	23.25	23.25	930,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7.4	7.4	7.3	7.3	1,161,000
Petron Corp.	4.25	4.3	4.2	4.25	3,871,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.8	1.88	1.8	1.88	124,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.95	0.94	0.94	110,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	10,000
CADP Group Corp.	2.28	2.28	2.28	2.28	1,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.5	23.5	23.25	23.5	55,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	34.5	35	34	34.5	325,400
Pancake House Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	20,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.85	2.85	2.8	2.8	300,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63	64	63	64	151,400
San Miguel Corp. B	71	71	70.5	71	315,300
Universal Robina Corp.	19.75	20	19.75	20	6,891,400
Vitarich Corp	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	300,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	900,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.3	1.3	1,490,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.7	209,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.6	4.75	4.6	4.75	13,458,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.26	1.3	1.26	1.3	183,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0975	0.0975	0.0925	0.0925	1,400,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.28	0.3	0.28	0.3	160,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp	400	402.5	395	397.5	81,580
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.6	5.7	5.6	5.6	240,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.026	0.026	0.024	0.024	39,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.65	3.65	3.55	3.55	597,000
APC Group Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.22	0.22	600,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	440,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.6	1.68	1.58	1.58	114,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	37,800
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.14	1.18	1.12	1.12	11,730,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.95	4.1	3.9	3.9	1,842,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.2	3.3	922,000
F&J Princ.E Holdings Corp.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	50,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	15,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000
SM Investments Corp.	225	226	225	226	833,640
South China Resources Inc.	1.04	1.04	0.92	0.92	220,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.84	0.84	0.75	0.75	170,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	900,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	13.25	13.5	13	13	12,914,900
Belle Corp	1.22	1.22	1.18	1.18	7,153,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	300,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2.06	2.1	2.04	2.04	255,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.185	0.19	0.185	0.185	2,820,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	4,960,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	10,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.039	0.039	0.039	0.039	100,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.42	1.44	1.4	1.42	6,355,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	12,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.52	1.54	16,783,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.21	0.24	0.21	0.225	40,850,000
Mrc Allied Ind. Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.23	0.23	270,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.105	0.11	0.105	0.11	1,200,000
Primex Corp	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	50,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.5	77,600
SM Development Corp.	1.64	1.68	1.64	1.68	76,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.1	8.1	8	8.1	3,974,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	30,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.0775	0.08	0.075	0.075	2,300,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	15	15	15	15	133,500
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	2,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.26	1.28	4,385,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	900	905	900	905	144,020
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.7	3.7	3.65	3.65	1,061,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2000	2020	2000	2015	324,650
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.18	0.185	2,530,000
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	5,000,000
Ionics Inc.	1.8	2	1.8	2	1,539,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	5,500,000
Music Semiconductors Corp	1.14	1.28	1.14	1.28	11,000
Philweb Corp	0.034	0.036	0.032	0.033	937,200,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	14	14	13.75	13.75	113,700
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	10,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	4.05	5	4	5	276,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.44	1.52	1.44	1.5	80,000
Manila Jockey Club	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	47,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.58	0.6	0.58	0.58	750,000
EDUCATION					
IPeople Inc.	3.05	3.05	3	3	11,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.14	2.16	2.1	2.16	408,000
Paxys Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.5	315,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.009	0.009	0.0085	0.0085	57,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	7	7.1	6.8	6.9	502,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	2,340,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	5,350,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.023	0.023	0.022	0.022	14,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.023	33,600,000
Omico Corp	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.008	389,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	3.5	3.5	3.35	3.35	10,049,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	3.55	3.55	3.25	3.35	18,177,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	28	28.5	28	28	206,100
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	1,100,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.56	0.56	0.53	0.53	590,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	13,500,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	200,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.16	1.2	1.16	1.16	997,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.2	1.2	1.16	1.16	482,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	15.75	16.5	15.5	15.75	748,800
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	11	11	11	11	1,400
PLDT 10% Pref Series BB	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,900
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (PDR)	15	15.25	15	15.25	319,400

CURRENCIES

June 4, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.781250	1.000000	52.9120
Japan	Yen	0.006936	0.008878	0.4698
United Kingdom	Pound	1.456641	1.864500	98.6544
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.100708	0.128906	6.8207
Switzerland	Franc	0.639269	0.818264	43.2960
Canada	Dollar	0.708745	0.907194	48.0014
Singapore	Dollar	0.494055	0.632391	33.461*
Australia	Dollar	0.583502	0.746882	39.5190
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.073381	2.653928	140.4246
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.208311	0.266638	14.1083
Brunei	Dollar	0.492498	0.630398	33.3556
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000107	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.020468	0.026199	1.3862
UAE	Dirham	0.212718	0.272279	14.4068
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.280000	67.7274
ArgentinaPeso	0.253817	0.324886	17.1904	
Brazil	Real	0.345166	0.441813	23.3772
Denmark	Kroner	0.134102	0.171650	9.0823
India	Rupee	0.016914	0.021650	1.1455
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.214806	0.274952	14.5483
Mexico	New Peso	0.069543	0.089015	4.7100
New Zealand	Dollar	0.493276	0.631393	33.4083
Norway	Kroner	0.128493	0.164471	8.7025
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012993	0.016631	0.8800
South Africa	Rand	0.117041	0.149813	7.9269
Korea	Won	0.000825	0.001056	0.0559
Sweden	Kroner	0.108193	0.138487	7.3276
Syria	Pound	0.015050	0.019264	1.0193
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024338	0.031153	1.6484
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000364	0.000466	0.0247

G & W clubshares
As of June 5, 2006
SHARES AVAILABLE

CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club A/B*	1,100,000/1,150,000*	1,500,000
Alta Vista B/Corp.*	-	Pls. Call/300,000*
Baguio Country Club	-	520,000
Camp John Hay	-	Pls. Call
Canyon Woods	120,000	-
Capitol Hills	80,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Celebrity Sports	120,000	-
Club Filipino	100,000	-
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	330,000*/Pls. Call	Pls. Call*
Eastridge A/B*	Pls. Call	-
Evercrest	65,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	100,000/170,000*	Pls. Call*
Luisita Golf	Pls. Call	300,000
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	12,000,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Manila Polo	Pls. Call	2,600,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	330,000/750,000*	300,000/700,000*
Makati Sports Club	180,000	160,000
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	310,000	-
Metropolitan Club A/B*	180,000	100,000
Mimosa Ind./C2*/C3**	Pls. Call	180,000/500,000**
Mt. Malarayat A	200,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	180,000/Pls. Call*/250,000**	150,000
Punta Fuego	400,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	160,000	Pls. Call
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	90,000/150,000*/280,000**	Pls. Call*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	-
Royale Tagaytay CC	80,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/150,000**	-
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	1,150,000	1,100,000/1,550,000*
The Palms Country Club	420,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	370,000	300,000
Tagaytay Highlands	680,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls. Call	600,000
The Country Club	3,000,000	-
Tower Club	160,000	130,000
Valley Golf	210,000	-
Valle Verde Ind.	100,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	Pls. Call	6,200,000

Tel. 8504161 (0917)3287788
E-mail: info@gwclubshares.com website: www.gwclubshares.com

GG&A Club Shares
SEC License Broker # 00131 • As of June 5, 2006

CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,100,000	-
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,150,000	-
Anvaya Cove Beach and Nature Club	Please Call	-
Baguio Country Club	550,000	500,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	40,000	-
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	70,000	-
Camp John Hay	230,000	190,000
Canlubang	500,000	475,000
Capitol Hills	80,000	45,000
Cebu Country Club	1,900,000	1,400,000
Celebrity Sports Club	120,000	100,000
Club Filipino	100,000	-
Eagleridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	-
Forest Hills "A"	100,000	-
Forest Hills "B"	170,000	-
Forest Hills "C"	180,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	100,000	-
Makati Sports Club "B"	250,000	-
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	12,000,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	-	11,500,000
Manila Polo	-	2,600,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	330,000	300,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	680,000	600,000
Manila Yacht Club	300,000*	-
Mimosa (Individual)	220,000	200,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	-	500,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	200,000	-
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	350,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "A"	180,000	150,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	350,000	300,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	350,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	160,000	-
Rockwell Club	Please Call	-
Spa & Lodge	650,000	450,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,200,000	1,100,000
Subic Bay Golf	200,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	380,000	320,000
Tagaytay Highlands	680,000	600,000
Tagaytay Midlands	840,000	800,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	-
Valle Verde (Corporate)	200,000	160,000
Valley Golf	230,000	180,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,400,000	6,200,000

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Energy body to monitor granting of special electricity rates

By Abigail L. Ho

THE ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION is requiring National Power Corp., National Transmission Corp. and all distribution utilities (DUs) to submit monthly reports on the preferential rates they offer to certain customers.

A resolution signed last month required Napocor, Transco, all DUs and other regulated entities to submit reports, on the 15th of every month, that include a list of customers enjoying preferential rates, the volume of electricity sold to such customers, the approved preferential rate for each customer, and the voltage level these customers are connected to.

"The granting of preferential rates may lead to cross-subsidies to other customers of DUs, Transco and Napocor. To protect the interest of the electricity consumers who are not granted preferential rates, the impact of the preferential rates must be monitored," the resolution states.

The resolution will take effect 15 days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

Responding to calls for more competitive power rates for exporters, Napocor currently offers special rates to at least seven economic zones in the country.

The state firm has been offering "special and competitive generation rates" to these ecozones since August last year.

Benefiting from the lower power rates are the Subic Bay Freeport in Zambales, the Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga, the Cavite Export Processing Zone, the Bataan Export Processing Zone, the Baguio City Export Processing Zone and the Mactan I and II Export Processing Zones in Cebu.

Napocor also wants to provide discounts to export-oriented enterprises located within industrial estates.

The special discounts or preferential rates, however, will be subject to negotiations of the firms' minimum contracted energy.

SE Asia seen stronger, wiser after '97 crisis

Region not completely immune to external shocks

By Doris C. Dumlao

TOKYO—NINE YEARS AFTER THE currency turmoil that depressed asset prices across the region, Southeast Asia has emerged much stronger and wiser, but not completely immune to potentially contagious shocks, financial experts said.

"There's reason to be optimistic, but there's reason to be less sanguine," Hans Genberg, executive director for research at Hong Kong Monetary Authority, said at the World Bank's Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics (ABCDE) here.

He said capital flows to Asian emerging markets were still largely affected by interest rate levels and liquidity in developed countries.

"That could lead to risks of repricing assets in emerging markets and potentially low level of capital inflows and, in the extremes scenario, a stop in the capital flow. In such cases, growth will slow down, the macro-economic picture will look worse," he said.

Mansoor Dailami and Hans Timmer, authors of the World Bank's Global Development Finance 2006, said emerging markets were now on a much better footing and that growth would likely remain strong despite high oil prices.

They said that Asian markets - learning from the currency crisis of 1997—had initiated reforms to improve their domestic economic fundamentals.

Genberg said there were at least two reasons to be more optimistic on the region: capital flows to emerging markets in recent years were in the form of foreign direct investments, rather than debt proceeds, and the increasing south-to-south FDI flows, or capital flows from developing countries to other developing countries.

The World Bank's GDF 2006 noted the following:

- Exchange rate regimes are now more flexible, with 62 percent of countries adopting this scheme versus 33 percent during the previous episode;
- Oil exporters and emerging Asia now have sizeable current account surpluses and reserves;
- External debt positions have improved;
- Most countries have developed local debt markets;

There is less reliance on short-term bank debt; and,

- FDI accounts for 57 percent of private capital flows versus 47 percent the last time.

Lafayette issue closely watched by investors

THE PHILIPPINES CAN BE A MAjor player in mining and it can expect more investments that will create jobs and develop local communities, the Joint Foreign Chambers said in a statement.

The JFC, however, expressed concern over recent events that, it said, might not just halt mining revitalization but send it into reverse. The group was referring to Lafayette's Rapu Rapu projet.

In the said statement, the JFC said the Rapu Rapu project had complied with all government requirements and should be allowed to resume operations.

"We believe it should be allowed to do so; otherwise a negative signal to the international mining industry could result in a serious loss of investor interest," it added.

The statement mentioned the recommendations of the Bastes Commission to close down Lafayette and review mining laws. It added, though, that "it is very important that mining operations be allowed to continue under the guidelines of the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources)."

"Strengthening the law is not required," it said, adding that its full implementation is the key. The group said its member-chambers were supporting responsible mining.

"The mining sector can be a major contributor to the future economic growth of the Philippines by providing skilled jobs in rural communities and significant revenue to the government," it said.

In the past 18 months, $140 million out of the $1.8 billion in foreign direct investments registered with the Board of Investments went to mining.

Buñag backs Teves on revenue goals

REVENUE COMMISSIONER JOSE Mario Buñag expressed full support for Finance Secretary Margarito Teves' objective of meeting the government's P975-billion revenue target for the year, adding that the agency had been tapping all possible tax sources and revving up collection efforts to support the bid.

Buñag said the Bureau of Internal Revenue was "solidly behind the aspiration to eliminate budget deficits by 2008" and that it shared Teves' view that the 2006 revenue collection targets were reasonable and vital to the effort to bring down the current year deficit to no more than P125 billion.

The BIR chief made the statement to correct earlier impressions that BIR wanted a reduction in the revenue collection targets for 2006.

"No, I did not ask for a collection target reduction," Buñag said in the statement.

He said he was also supporting Teves' plan to reallocate the collection target among the various agencies of the DOF. He also said Teves' plan to review the agency targets with the BIR, Bureau of Customs and the Bureau of Treasury "will help put our revenue collection responsibilities in the proper perspective."

Teves earlier said the review might lead to an internal reallocation of targets within the agencies when the figures come in sometime in June without revising the year-end collection goal.

He said some revenue targets lodged with the BIR were actually being collected by, and credited to, other agencies. He cited the P27 billion in value added taxes on imported oil credited to the Bureau of Customs.

Buñag also said the BIR was set to work closely with the National Tax Research Center and other government agencies to tap new opportunities and plug loopholes in the intensified collection drive.

He said the BIR was set to join hands with the Department of Trade and Industry in the stricter monitoring of the granting of tax incentives to local and international companies.

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The Real Stripes Matter.

LandBank to arrange ₱1.5-B MWSS bond offer

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE METROPOLITAN WATERWORKS AND Sewerage System (MWSS) has tapped the Land Bank of the Philippines as its lead arranger and underwriter for its planned P1.5-billion bond offering.

According to MWSS Deputy Administrator Macra Cruz, the agency's board of directors has mandated the Land Bank to be its lead arranger and underwriter for the bond offering that would be used to pay off the maturing debts of west concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc.

"Maynilad's debts—under what is referred to as concession fees—will fall due within the year," Cruz told the INQUIRER.

MWSS Finance Department manager Estrellito Polloso said in another interview that the agency is now seeking the approval of the Department of Finance and the Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas for a sovereign guarantee before the water utility proceeds with the bond offering next month.

According to Polloso, the bond will only carry a one-year tenor.

When Maynilad failed to settle its concession fees beginning March 2001, the government agency took over the west concessionaire's debt amounting to more than P10 billion.

Maynilad's creditors include multilateral agencies such as the Asian Development Bank, Japan Bank for International Cooperation and the World Bank.

The concession fees are used to service the old debts of the MWSS. When the two private concessionaires—including the Manila Water Co.—took over operations of the utility, they also assumed the debts of the MWSS.

Maynilad in particular absorbed 90 percent, or $800 million, of MWSS' debts because the agency took over the bulk of the concession area.

When Maynilad defaulted on the payment of its concession fees, the government-led MWSS decided to take over Maynilad while the private company was placed under rehabilitation.

At present, the MWSS holds 84 percent of Maynilad's equity, which it intends to bid out by the end of the third quarter.

Maynilad's designated court receiver, lawyer Rosario Bernaldo, has sought the suspension of payment of concession fees until a new investor comes in.

COIN RECIRCULATION
Four major business organizations have signed up to support the national coin recirculation program of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. BSP Gov. Amando Tetangco Jr., (fourth from right) shakes the hand of Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) president Donald Dee (third from right) at the conclusion of the BSP meeting with the business groups. Other signatories are (from right): Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc. president Francis Chua; Employers' Confederation of the Philippines chair Miguel Varela; Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc. president Sergio Ortiz-Luis and BSP Deputy Gov. Diwa Guinigundo.

Sharp increases in world oil prices seen to benefit RP

OFWs in Mideast profit from price shocks, says analyst

By Doris C. Dumlao

TOKYO—WHILE MOST COUNTRIES around the world are reeling from the effects of the oil price shocks, the Philippines appears to be weathering the shocks, according to a top JP Morgan strategist.

Remittances from overseas Filipinos working in the Middle East are providing the country with the much-needed insulation from external shocks brought on by surges in world oil prices, said Will Oswald, JP Morgan's global head of emerging market quantitative strategy.

"The Philippines is a natural oil importer and, therefore, the increase of oil prices has been negative [to the country]," Oswald told the INQUIRER at the sidelines of the World Bank's Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics. "But if you look at the sources of the remittances to the Philippines, a lot of those are coming from the Middle East.

"If you look at the increase in the remittances over the last three to four years, it's about $3-3.5 billion, which is about the same as the increase in the oil import bill. So, although the Philippines has a higher import bill, it has indirectly benefited from the uptick in oil price premium because of the boom on the amount of remittances flowing from the Middle East back to the Philippines."

Later, Oswald pointed out that his view has not been "fully explored." He said that there are people who believe that the increase in remittances happens to be the result of a shift to formal banking channels which, in turn, jacked up the captured figures.

"It's difficult to determine how much of that increase is due to the formalization of the flows or the natural increase in remittances," Oswald said. "But certainly, looking at the behavior of the peso, you can also see that in the changes in the errors and omissions (at the central bank's balance of payment tabulation), it indicates that this is a real increase in inflows."

The London-based Oswald was a panelist at a roundtable where the World Bank launched its latest global outlook on development finance.

According to the World Bank's Global Development Finance 2006, estimated remittance flows—defined as the sum of workers' remittances, compensation of employees, and migrant transfers—exceeded $233 billion worldwide in 2005, of which $167 billion had been poured into developing countries.

Total flows, including those coursed through informal channels, could even push the figure higher by 50 percent based on conservative estimates, the GDF said.

"Recently, high oil prices have swelled remittance flows from oil-exporting countries," the publication said. "Bahrain, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the Russion Federation have been important sources of remittances to developing countries."

The GDF 2006 also said the depreciation of the US dollar which, in turn, raised the value of remittances when converted into local currencies, as well as the growth in the number of migrants and their incomes, had contributed further to the surge in remittances.

According to the World Bank, remittances bring the following substantial benefits to developing countries:

- Household survey evidence indicates that remittances can have a significant impact on reducing poverty;
- Remittances are associated with increased household investment in education, entrepreneurship and health, all of which have a high social return;
- Remittances tend to support economic activity in the face of adverse shocks; and,
- By generating a steady stream of foreign exchange, remittances can boost a country's creditworthiness.

ERC approves Napocor rate adjustment

By Abigail L. Ho

THE ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION has approved the inclusion of a P3.83 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) charge in the fuel and purchased power cost adjustment of the National Power Corp. for power contracted from the 345-megawatt (MW) San Roque Multipurpose Project in Pangasinan.

In an order dated Feb. 24, the ERC said the recoverable amount would be pegged on the effective rate of the Luzon grid, or P3.83 per kWh—the rate that Napocor considered as the capacity fee for the San Roque power plant.

The P3.83-per-kWh rate was the same rate that the ERC allowed Napocor to include in its generation rate adjustment mechanism (Gram) filing, under a provisional authority issued on Nov. 26, 2004.

The recoverable amount could also be pegged on the purchased power cost under Napocor's build-operate-transfer (BOT) agreement for the San Roque plant, if this would be lower than the effective rate for the Luzon grid.

Under Napocor's contract with the San Roque consortium, the cost of electricity is P5.62 per kWh with the yen component of the capacity fee spread over 12 years; P7.73 per kWh with the yen component spread over 25 years; and P9.11 per kWh as the actual estimated rate of the consortium to Napocor for the January-December 2004 period.

While all the rates were more than the rate granted under the provisional authority, the ERC, in approving the inclusion of the San Roque contract in Napocor's FPCA, also considered the power plant's quantitative benefits in terms of reduced emissions, as well as an opportunity for increasing energy self-reliance.

"Given the increasing power requirements in the Luzon grid, the operation of the San Roque Multipurpose Project will enable Napocor to meet the increase in demand and will ensure the customers of efficient and reliable power supply," the ERC order stated. "This is in accord with the government policy on the exploration, development, utilization, distribution and conservation of energy resources with preference for environment-friendly and indigenous sources of energy."

Gov't seen to spend more to lure buyers of debt paper

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT IS SAID to be paying more premium to lure investors to its debt paper as the "unfriendly" domestic environment is seen to aggravate external market jitters.

Dilip Shahani, a fixed income analyst for HSBC Global Research, said in a commentary dated May 29 that delays in adopting the 2006 national budget of P1.053 trillion had also eroded an already weak sentiment caused by a string of negative domestic and external factors in recent weeks.

"As a result, there has been a desire to reduce exposure to Philippine sovereign local and dollar debt securities," Shahani said.

As of May 26, he noted that the five-year credit default swap (CDS) of Republic of the Philippines' (ROP) dollar-denominated bonds had widened by about 45.7 basis points to close at 208.33 basis points from a tight print of 162.57 basis points on May 11.

CDS is an instrument usually offered by banks as security against losses in case of default. Its pricing thus reflects the market's assessment on the probability of a default.

It was also noted that the five-year domestic Treasury bond yield had jumped to 10.37 percent on May 23 from only 6.63 percent at the start of May.

"Looking ahead, we feel there should be modest retracement in both the domestic and the US dollar market for Philippine debt in the coming weeks," Shahani said, noting that the government's strong cash position should ease concern about budget financing for 2006.

But Shahani said he could not envision Philippine debt paper going back to the tight prints the country enjoyed earlier this year.

The HSBC analyst projected that the ROP five-year CDS would trade at about 185-210 bps in the near term, and end the year at above the 200-bps mark.

Average five-year T-bond yield is seen slipping back to 7.75-8.25 percent from the current rate of 8.77 percent. It is also expected to rise at above 8 percent by yearend compared to the low of 6.44 percent last April.

"Prospects of higher global interest rates (in Japan and Europe), coupled with an unfriendly domestic political environment suggest that investors will demand a slightly higher risk premium to hold on to Philippine financial assets," Shahani said. "Stalling of structural reform and the inability to establish fiscal sustainability will translate to higher funding costs."

The big miss on the national government's revenue target for April, the analyst said, revived concerns that the go-

GOV'T/B11

ROUNDUP

The disputed Spratlys: To drill or not to drill?

THE PHILIPPINE National Oil Co., China National Offshore Oil Co. (CNOOC) and Vietnam Oil and Gas Corp. (PetroVietnam) will decide by the fourth quarter whether to continue gathering data on, or to start drilling in, an area that includes the disputed Spratlys.

PNOC president and chief executive Eduardo Manalac said the three national oil companies had already gathered and processed 11,000 kilometers worth of data from the area.

Data interpretation is ongoing at the PNOC grounds, conducted jointly by representatives from PNOC, CNOOC and PetroVietnam, he said.

"We expect to complete the interpretation by late third quarter or early fourth quarter," he told reporters. "That would enable us to decide what to do next, either hold a second phase of seismic (research) or decide to drill."

Abigail L. Ho

PCGG seeks to defer Philcomsat meet

THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION on Good Government has asked the Securities and Exchange Commission to defer the holding of a stockholder's meeting based on an appeal made by a group claiming to be the "united board" of Philcomsat Holdings Corp. (PHC), PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede said.

In a letter filed with the SEC, the PCGG said it is negotiating with all parties to conduct the stockholders' meetings of the three controversial Philcomsat firms, whose ownership have long been contested since the government sequestered the firms in 1986.

The three firms are Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp., its subsidiary Philippine Communications Satellite Corp., and affiliate PHC.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

A backdoor listing on the big board

A DE FACTO BACKDOOR listing of trunk radio operator Next Mobile Inc. is pushing ahead at a snail's pace.

After announcing a P6.5 billion share-swap deal early last month with online trading company Cashrounds Inc., Next Mobile and Cashrounds are now taking the proposed deal one step at a time to meet requirements of the Philippine Stock Exchange.

To be able to move on from its current place at the SME board to the stock exchange's big board—where companies capitalized at P400 million or more get to trade—Cashrounds will have to acquire 19 percent of Next Mobile through a share swap deal valued at P1.3 billion.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

How to bring consumer prices down

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

IN THIS MADDENING ERA OF ever rising consumer prices, the only thing you can buy more cheaply today than ten years ago is fire insurance.

Why this phenomenon? In one word, competition.

In 1994, in line with the Asean Free Trade Agreements, the Insurance Commission, with a stroke of the pen and the approval of the Department of Finance, broke up the long-standing fire insurance cartel.

For decades before the AFTA, the price of fire insurance was fixed by a closely-knit cartel composed of all insurance companies, foreign and domestic.

The price list and the rules of the game were inscribed in an elaborate manual called the tariff. Severe penalties were slapped for violating—the technical term was breaching—the tariff.

When the Insurance Code was extensively rewritten in 1974, the fire insurance cartel became even more powerful.

It was the only cartel in our history to be endowed with a government license to operate.

In 1994, the Insurance Commission withdrew the cartel's license. The tariff was scrapped. Each company was then free to price its fire insurance policies.

At the same time, the Commission threw the country open to foreign competition. A foreign company could come in through any of three doors: Buy into an existing domestic company, set up a subsidiary, or open a branch. Some of the world's largest companies accepted the invitation.

The insurance industry became the most liberalized business in the country.

The buyer could then choose from a dizzying array of products offered by various companies at highly competitive prices.

On average, fire insurance premiums today are about one-fifth what it used to be ten years ago. And the premiums are still falling.

And yet, the fire insurance industry has never been as vibrant, and companies are making tons of money. Business volume has gone up as people who never bought before are buying fire insurance for the first time.

At rock bottom prices, it is almost a mortal sin not to buy fire insurance.

If I had my way, I would break up all the cartels, such as in oil, banking, medicine, cement, flour milling, etc., that plague the country.

I would set up a division at the Department of Justice to implement the anticartel provisions of the penal code.

This office would be similar to the all-powerful Anti-Trust Division of the US Department of Justice. Secretary Raul Gonzalez will have more fun running after cartels than the Batasan 5.

I would dismantle all price regulatory boards and price coordinating councils. Consumer prices should not be set at meetings between sellers and buyers in an air-conditioned government office. Instead, prices should be allowed to rise and fall in the sunlit uplands of a free and open market.

I would scrap the so-called safeguard duties, such as those on imported cement and chicken, and all other protectionist rules.

It is ridiculous that Thai chicken should be slapped a 40-percent import tariff. I would ask our chicken raisers to find out how the Thais have been able to cut costs.

Toyota has pushed General Motors, the world's largest corporation, to the brink of bankruptcy. GM would not dare ask the US government for a safeguard duty, which would not be granted anyway.

Instead, GM is desperately cutting costs to make its cars competitive. The buyer can look forward to cheaper and better cars.

Here, the safeguard duty doesn't protect the cement industry and the poultry raisers anyway. They end up having to contend with our resourceful big-time smugglers.

Without the safeguard duty, cement and chicken prices will drop, triggering a rise in demand. The cement factories and poultry raisers will have to crank up to meet this rising demand. They will have so much business they would not know what to do with their profits.

We should learn the lessons from the liberalization of the insurance industry. Then, we can all sit back and enjoy watching consumer prices—including interest rates—come tumbling down.

RP on track to host 3M tourists in '06–Durano

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE COUNTRY MAY SEE AS MANY AS three million tourists visiting local shores after a sharp increase in visitor arrivals during the first four months of the year, the tourism department said.

If achieved, this number will represent an almost 15-percent increase over the 2.61 million visitors the country hosted last year.

In an interview, Tourism Secretary Joseph H. Durano expressed optimism that the three-million target can be achieved based on indications during the first part of the year, including the summer season or the last two months.

"The numbers are very good," he said. "The arrivals during the fist four months are up 14 percent from the same period last year."

From January to April of this year, Durano said that the tourism department recorded almost one million tourist arrivals, including expatriate Filipinos living abroad or the so-called "balikbayans."

"What we're seeing so far is very encouraging," he added, noting that the surge in tourism was fueling an expansion in many business sectors, including the hotel industry which, in turn, means better business for the construction industry.

Based on the strong performance of the first four months of 2005, Durano said that tourism only has to grow by an average of 11 percent for the rest of the year for the government to meet its three-million target by yearend.

"It is very achievable," he added, even as he warned that visitor arrivals for the rest of the year may slacken off, especially during the traditional off-peak season of the second quarter.

"It will balance itself out over the rest of the year," he assured.

Last Friday, Durano launched the tourism department's partnership with private corporations to entice more tourists, especially expatriate Filipinos based in North America.

He said the program aims to draw in more tourists among the 3.3 million-strong Filipino community in the US and Canada, which is a traditionally large spending group.

Durano said that 528,000 tourists and "balikbayans" visited the Philippines last year—the highest level in 20 years.

Almost half of these visitors were first-time tourists.

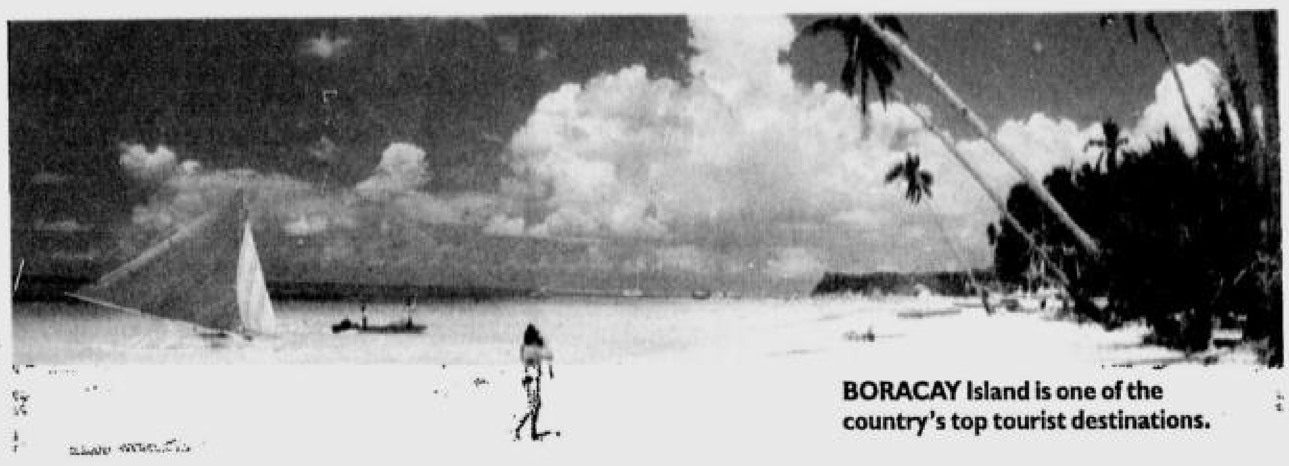
"We are aiming to increase this to at least 600,000 this year," Duran revealed. "What we capture at present is only a very small fraction of the North American market."

To meet this target, the Department of Tourism has partnered with private firms like Abenson, American Eye Center, Avis, Globe Telecom, Jollibee, the Kuok Group, Philippine Airlines and the Philippine National Bank to set up a system of enticements and rewards for tourists.

All tourists from North America are automatically enrolled the promo which will have a unit at a new Shangri-la condominium development as its grand raffle prize, Durano said.

He revealed that tourists spend an average of $90 in a day in the country, and stay anywhere between seven and 12 days.

Durano revealed that North American "balikbayans" are particularly attractive to the tourism department because they tend to stay in hotels rather than go home to their relatives—a habit that further fuels the tourism industry.


BORACAY Island is one of the country's top tourist destinations.

Halal forum set to help RP food firms

By Ronnel W. Domingo

HALAL EXPERTS FROM VARIOUS MARKETS and authoritative bodies are expected to take part in an international forum to be held in Makati City on June 26 aimed at enhancing the Philippines' ability to break into the global industry.

The Manila International Forum on Halal Trade and Industry would be held in the wake of the United Arab Emirates' accreditation of a Philippine halal certifier, which ensured access of local producers and exporters to the $150-billion-yearly food industry.

Abdul Rahman RT Linzag, president of the Islamic Da'wah Council of the Philippines, said the gathering would tackle business opportunities for halal-certified products and the intricacies of the certification process as well as experiences of companies in the market.

Halal is an Arabic word that can be generally translated as "permissible" and, in relation to consumables, refer to products that Muslims are allowed to use, eat and drink in the observance of Islam.

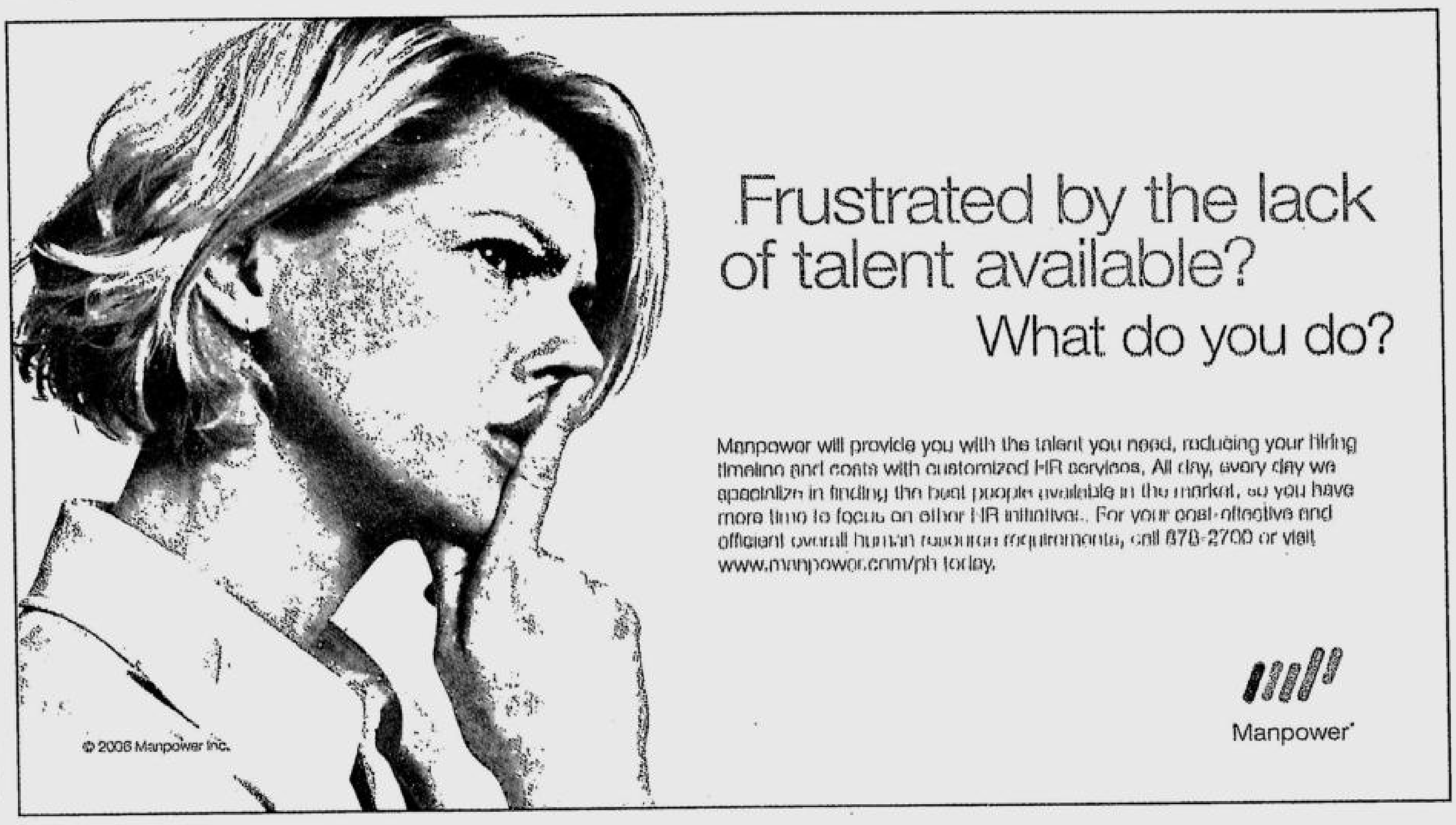
Organized with the help of the Jakarta-based World Halal Council (WHC), the forum is meant for manufacturers of food and non-food products, halal certified companies and concerned business entities and government agencies involved in the halal industry here and abroad.

Linzag said guests would include representatives from the WHC; IslamicFood Council of Europe; Halal Feed and Food Inspection Authority of Holland; halal promotion organization based in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore; and halal certification authorities in Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

He explained that the forum represented efforts aimed at following through with the initial successes of Philippine efforts to serve the local market and tap the global market, particularly with the accreditation of IDCP with the United Arab Emirates—considered the gateway to the lucrative Middle East market.

Linzag said his group's accreditation meant that Philippine-made halal products would now be acceptable not only to Middle Eastern markets but also to the rest of the world.

"The apparent success of IDCP is also a success of the entire country," Linzag said. "More than a sign of acceptability to Islamic standards, certification of products as halal nowadays mean a proof of high quality which all kinds of markets look for."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June 05, 2006

NOTICE OF AUCTION SALE

TO ALL MEMBERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC:

The Bidding Committee of Manila Golf and Country Club, Inc., hereby announces the auction sale of the following:

(a) Two (2) individual proprietary membership certificates

(b) Two (2) corporate proprietary membership certificates

Any interested party may submit his/its written bid beginning today until 4:00 p.m., June 15, 2006 to the Office of the Club's General Manager

The bid shall be subject to the following conditions:

(a) Minimum bid of P11,750,000.00 for individual proprietary membership certificate

(b) Minimum bid of P 12,750,000.00 for corporate proprietary membership certificate.

(c) Bids shall be accompanied by manager's check equivalent to 20% of the bid price payable to the Manila Golf and Country Club, Inc. and the balance within three (3) days from notice of bid acceptance.

(d) Exemption from the transfer fee of P 300,000.00.

(e) Certificate will be issued immediately upon receipt of full payment and documentary stamp taxes.

ÇESAR C. CRUZ
Chairman, Bidding Committee

(PDI--June 5, 2006)

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RoHS Compliance Seminar Analytical Considerations: Sampling and Test Methods

(Restriction of Use of certain Hazardous Substances in Electrical and Electronic Equipment)

June 20, 2006 (9am - 3pm)
Mandarin Oriental, Makati

The RoHS Directive 2002/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 January 2003 restricts the use of hazardous materials in the manufacture of various types of electronic and electrical equipment. The RoHS directive will ban the placing on the EU market of new electrical and electronic equipment containing these hazardous materials effective 1st July 2006.

This seminar aims to promote better understanding of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and RoHS directives, as enacted by the European Union, and it's implications on the manufacturing supply chain of electronics and electrical products. The presentation also aims to provide an insight to RoHS testing procedures.

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/ contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the projects as stated below:

Item / Description	Approved Budget	Date/Time		NON-REFUNDABLE FEE
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	
150 pcs. Passbook Printers	P7,500,000.00	June 8, 2006 1:00 pm	June 21, 2006 1:00 PM	P 3,800.00
1 lot Supply and Delivery of 75 units 2821/2801 Routers	P26,268,125.00	June 8, 2006 1:00 pm	June 21, 2006 1:00 PM	P 13,200.00
1 lot Supply and Delivery of Security Appliance	P2,860,448.16	June 8, 2006 1:00 pm	June 21, 2006 1:00 PM	P1,500.00
1 lot Supply, Delivery and Installation of Firewall System (Clustered Solution)	P3,250,000.00	June 8, 2006 1:00 pm	June 21, 2006 1:00 PM	P1,700.00

The Bid Documents shall be available at the General Services Department starting May 29, 2006 upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at GSD Conference Room, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M. H. del Pilar St., Malate, Manila.

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes in the bid box located at the abovementioned address.

For more information, please call the LBP-Requisitions Management Division at telephone nos 551-2200 locals 2452, 2453, 7233 & 7234.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s).

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI–May 29 & June 5, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Transportation and Communications
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO SUBMIT LETTER OF INTENT

The Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) is hereby inviting prospective bidders to submit their Letter of Intent to participate in the upcoming procurement of Civil Works Contractors and Equipment Suppliers for the Laguindingan Airport Development Project (LADP).

The project scope may include but not limited to: (i) Construction of new runway and taxiway, (ii) construction of new apron and other airside civil works, (iii) construction of new passenger terminal building and other landside civil works and (iv) provision of new air navigational and other airport equipment.

The bidding procedure shall be in accordance with the International Competitive Bidding stated in the Guidelines for Procurement under the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) Loan. The bidding will commence after the updating of project cost and re-engagement of consulting services.

Submission of Letter of Intent shall not be later than **15 June 2006** addressed to The Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee for Foreign-Assisted Projects, DOTC at Unit 61, 6th Floor, The Columbia Tower, Ortigas Avenue, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila.

(Sgd.) ROBERT R. CASTAÑARES
BAC Chairman

(PDI - May 22, 29 and June 05, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Transportation and Communications
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO SUBMIT LETTER OF INTENT

The Department of Transportation and Communications is hereby inviting prospective bidders/challengers to submit their Letter of Intent for the "Swiss Challenge" of the proposal to Finance, Design, Construct, Operate and Maintain the planned 23-km MRT Line 7 Project (EDSA/North Avenue, Quezon City to San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan) including its 22-km. road access component (NLEX Bocaue Exit to San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan) submitted by Universal LRT Corporation (BVI) Ltd., the original proponent of the project, through the Unsolicited Build, Gradual Transfer, Operate and Maintain Scheme, a variant of the Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) mode.

The proposed bidding shall be governed by the BOT Law (R.A. No. 7718) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Submission of Letter of Intent shall not be later than 15 June 2006 addressed to The Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee, DOTC at Unit 61, 6th Floor, The Columbia Tower, Ortigas Avenue, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila.

(Sgd.) ROBERT R. CASTAÑARES
BAC Chairman

(PDI–May 23, 29 & June 5, 2006)

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NUESTRA SEÑORA DE GUIA PARISH Ermita, Manila	7:30 a.m.
OUR LADY OF SORROWS PARISH F.B. Harrison, Pasay City	6:00 a.m.
MANILA CATHEDRAL Intramuros, Manila	7:30 a.m.
ASSUMPTION PARISH Leveriza, Manila	6:00 a.m. 6:15 p.m.
HARRISON PLAZA CHAPEL Malate, Manila	12:00 noon 5:30 p.m.
OUR LADY OF EDSA SHRINE Ortigas Ave., Quezon City	12:15 p.m.
SAN AGUSTIN CHURCH Intramuros, Manila	7:00 a.m.
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL PARISH San Marcelino St., Ermita, Manila	6:30 a.m. 7:15 a.m. 8:00 a.m. 12:10 p.m. 5:10 p.m.
ST. JOHN BOSCO PARISH Arnaiz St., Makati City	7:30 a.m.
ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE PARISH Bel-Air, Makati City	6:30 a.m. 12:15 noon 6:30 p.m.
BACLARAN REDEMPTORIST CHURCH Baclaran, Parañaque	6:45 a.m.
MINOR BASILICA OF THE BLACK NAZARENE Quiapo, Manila	6:00 a.m.
ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGUORI PARISH Magallanes Village, Makati City	6:15 a.m. 7:00 a.m. 12:15 p.m. 6:00 p.m.

Her family kindly request all readers to remember her in their prayers.

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IN LOVING MEMORY ON THE 1ST YEAR DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF

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Who passed on to Eternal Life on June 5, 2005 at Sunnyvale CA, USA

Masses will be offered at the following dates:

Perpetual Village Chapel Taguig, M.M.	June 4, 2006	9:00 a.m.
180 Elm Court Apt. 1402 Sunnyvale CA, USA 94086	June 5, 2006	6:30 p.m.
St. Lukes Church 1111 Beach Park Blvd. Foster City, CA, USA	June 5, 2006	7:00 p.m.
Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish Multinational Village, Parañaque City	June 6, 2006	6:15 a.m.
Mary Queen of Apostles Parish Church San Antonio Valley 6, Sucat Parañaque City	June 6, 2006	7:30 p.m.

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The bereaved family of our **"Lola Ikit"**, **Natividad Rios Ramiro** (sister), **Eligio & Cecilia Rios Sr.**, (brother & sister-in-law) nephews, nieces & grandchildren request for your prayers for her eternal happiness in heaven.

Her body lies in state at the Presidential Suite, Loyola Memorial Chapel, Guadalupe.

Interment will be on June 6, 2006 at the Holy Cross Memorial Park at 2:00 p.m. after the 1:00 p.m. Mass.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." *John 3:16*

Family-based firms prop RP's ₱118.7-B hog raising industry

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE HOG INDUSTRY, valued at P118.7 billion in 2005 and the second top agricultural contributor after *palay*, continues to be sustained by family-based enterprises, a Department of Agriculture official said.

At least 76 percent of 12.2 million hogs produced last year were fattened in backyards, not in commercial farms, said Pedro Ocampo, executive director of DA's livestock development council, citing Bureau of Agricultural Statistics data.

Backyard production refers to an operation involving a maximum of 100 hogs, he said.

Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog raised more swine, contributing 13.73 percent and 13.04 percent, respectively, to last year's inventory.

Western Visayas emerged as a major source of hogs, increasing its share to 9.49 percent from 7.35 percent in 1980.

While stocks in backyards increased by 50 percent between 1980 and 2005, inventories in commercial farms for the same period grew by 100 percent.

Ocampo said the industry was thriving. Pork comprised 79 percent of the total volume of meat produced last year.

Preference for pork has risen, with per capita consumption reaching 16.6 kilograms in 2004 from just 9 kg in 1980.

Domestic producers still dominate the industry, but imports largely by meat processors began increasing in 2000.

Imports rose to 34,083 metric tons (MT) in 2004 from just 454 MT in 1985. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

THE CLARK International Airport is one of the prime attractions of the Clark Economic Zone, and investors are seen to stay with the expected return of tax incentives.

Clark investors cheer pro-tax perks bills

Restoration of fiscal incentives awaited

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—INVESTORS here said they were beginning to feel optimistic again after the House of Representatives last week approved on third reading two bills granting them tax amnesty and returning fiscal incentives nullified by the Supreme Court in July last year.

"We're very, very happy. Things are beginning to look bright for us," Francisco Villanueva, president of the Clark Investors and Locators Association (Cila), told the INQUIRER last year.

House Bill 4900 and HB 5064 were passed three months after the House committee on ways and means, chaired by Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus, pushed the bills for plenary discussion.

The measures evolved from Joint Resolution No. 9 that President Macapagal-Arroyo certified to the Senate and House as urgent in September 2005.

The resolution sought to confirm the legislative intent of the Bases Conversion Development Act of 1992 (Republic Act 7227) to grant tax and duty free incentives to the CSEZ and other special economic zones created under Section 15 of the law.

Losing the privilege of paying only 5 percent of gross income and making them pay 32 percent in taxes cut into the survival of Clark businesses, Cila had said in previous statements.

At stake were aggregate investments of P19 billion, levies and taxes worth P800 million annually and more than 37,000 workers, Cila said.

The group said many of its members were planning to move to China or Vietnam where the cost of doing business was much lower.

Foreign business chambers supported Cila's lobby to get back their incentives.

Antonio Ng, Clark Development Corp. president, said the "action now shifts to the Senate."

Senators Ralph Recto, Richard Gordon, Juan Ponce Enrile and Manuel Roxas II have filed counterpart bills. Ng said the lawmakers have committed to undertake a "speedy bicameral conference."

Secretary Edgardo Pamintuan, head of the Subic-Clark Area Development Council, said the investment policies in Clark needed to be clarified and improved so that the ecozone could be fully maximized, like the Subic Bay Freeport in Zambales and Bataan.

The Arroyo administration has marketed Subic and Clark as the best logistics hubs in Southeast Asia, connecting these via a P21-billion, 97-kilometer expressway.

The two ecozones are the largest in the country, with a combined area of more than 80,000 hectares and equipped with two airports.

But tax grants for Subic investors were explicit in RA 7227 but not in other bases converted into industrial or tourism enclaves like Clark in Pampanga and Camp John Hay in Baguio City, the Supreme Court said in its July 29, 2005 ruling. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Mutual benefits groups directed to set up fund

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INSURANCE COMMISSION has required mutual benefits associations in the country to set up a guaranty fund to cover the claims of its members.

IC Commissioner Evangeline Escobillo decreed that starting July 1, new mutual benefit associations or those seeking rehabilitation must put up an initial guaranty fund equivalent to at least 25 percent of the P125 million minimum paid-up capital required for new insurance companies.

By the end of this year, all existing mutual benefit associations must also have a minimum guaranty fund of P12.5 million, said a recent IC circular.

Escobillo explained that a mutual benefit association functions like an insurance company, but it serves the interest of its own members, like the AFP Mutual Benefits Association.

Mutual benefits associations provide for its members sick benefits, financial support while out of employment and death benefits to relatives of deceased members. The members usually belong to the less advantaged sectors.

Because of their purpose and social impact, these associations are regulated by the IC, which noted that a number of these entities had failed because of mismanagement and failure to comply with regulations.

The IC said the establishment of a guaranty fund was necessary to protect the interests of its members.

"All mutual benefit associations shall deposit with the IC the amount of guaranty fund required in cash or in government securities with a total value equal to such amount," the circular said.

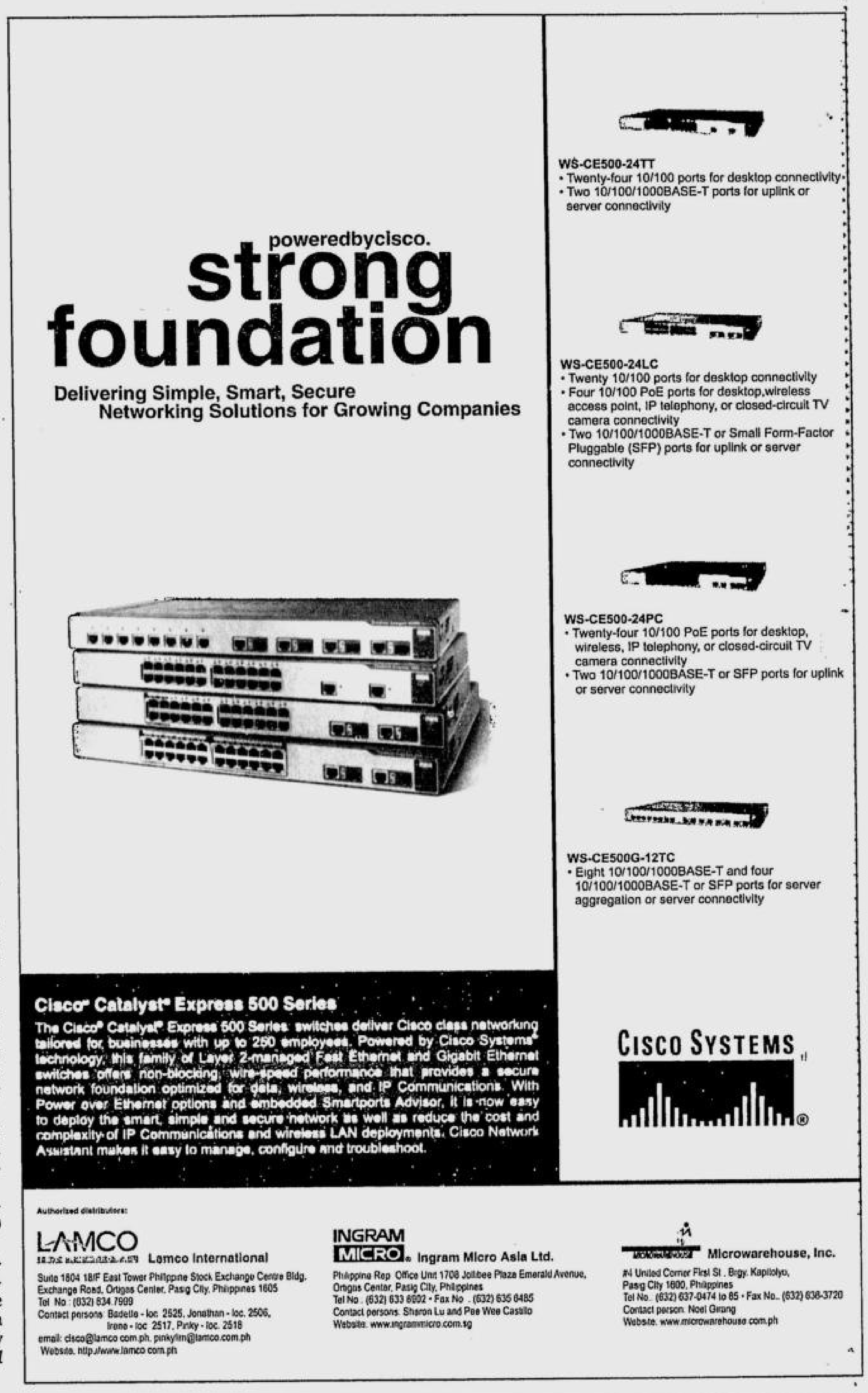
The IC said it shall invest the money in government securities or in interest-bearing deposits with any financially sound commercial bank or trust entity for the account of the particular mutual benefit association that put up the guaranty fund.

Gov't seen to spend ...

From page B8

vernment might be unable to meet this year's deficit cap of P125 billion. He added that investors were also concerned about comments from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas that local interest rates might be a bit low.

"These unfriendly statements, coupled with possible increase in government borrowing, triggered dumping of domestic debt securities," the analyst said. "Most importantly, retail investors were spooked by the potential capital losses since they had purchased new unit investment trust funds in anticipation of higher returns than that achieved on regular deposits. *Doris C. Dumlao*



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Getting you ready for the world

LOCAL CULINARY EDUCATION JUST got a big boost with the opening of the first American culinary school in the Philippines at the Makati business district. The American Hospitality Academy (AHA), with more than 20 years of experience in the hospitality industry, has partnered with a Philippine management team to offer a comprehensive and practical hands-on culinary training. AHA has been designated by the US Department of State as sponsor of an Exchange Visitor Program that has provided structured training opportunities for students in the United States for 20 years now. Established in 1986 by Cindi Reiman, AHA has partnered with well-known hotel chains like the Ritz-Carlton, Hyatt, Marriott and Hilton, to name a few.

Its 6-month Diploma in Culinary Arts and 9-month Diploma in Culinary Entrepreneurship will have students experiencing internship in well-known hotels and resorts locally and internationally. The first four months will be spent in school for lecture, demo and kitchen work and the next two months in internship in a local hotel or restaurant. After that, students can opt to go for overseas internship.

The first of its kind offering a paid internship abroad, AHA Philippines hopes to give Filipino culinary students the chance to work in the best hotel and resort chains in the United States from six months to a year. AHA gives students the chance to learn and train from the leaders of industry through a program of international internship following the prestigious Servlead Program (Service Leadership in a Multicultural Workplace). This unique internship program enables students to obtain international certification from the Education Institute of the American Hotel and Lodging Association (EI-AH&LA), the most highly recognized and most highly regarded mark of hospitality professionalism and was developed in collaboration with industry and academic partners all over the world with working students serving as ambassadors of their countries, while getting to experience diverse cultures from other students they meet. Perks of the program include a monthly stipend or hourly pay, free accommodations in completely furnished and comfortable apartments, daily transportation service to training sites and the option to pursue an international professional certification from the EI-AH&LA.

The school is presently processing applicants for the June 2006 intake. Be one of the first to experience a practical culinary education that will secure your future in the hospitality industry. Getting you ready for the world is just six months away.

AHA Philippines is located at 108 Aguirre Building, HV dela Costa corner Tordesillas Streets, Salcedo Village, Makati City. For inquiries, call 6700-8510, e-mail info@ahaphil.com or log on to www.ahaphil.com.

TOTAL DONATES TO SOUTHERN LEYTE REHAB

For every liter of gasoline and diesel sold from Feb. 28 to March 3, Total (Philippines) Corp donated 25 centavos to the landslide victims of Southern Leyte through the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC). Shown during the turnover of the check and boxes of goods donated by Total customers are (from left) Bong Tandoc, Total retail business manager, Anna Whitehouse, Total president and managing director, Sen. Richard Gordon, PNRC chair, and Gwen Pang, PNRC director for fund donation.

NORTHGATE
AFRICA ISRAEL

ISRAELI FIRM INVESTS IN NORTHGATE CYBERZONE

Cyberzone Properties Inc (CPI) recently signed an investment agreement with Africa Israel Investments (Philippines) Inc by which Africa Israel will become a shareholder of up to 40 percent of CPI. The proceeds from this private offering will be used to finance the construction of additional buildings and other facilities at the Northgate Cyberzone information technology park in Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang. One of Israel's largest companies, Africa Israel is a conglomerate with worldwide investments in residential real estate, shopping malls, energy, fashion, telecommunications and media, and infrastructure. Its shares are listed in the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange in Israel. Now a major outsourcing hub in Southern Metro Manila, the 18.7-hectare Northgate Cyberzone is a Peza-registered IT park and is developed by CPI. Northgate Cyberzone has a thriving 24/7 population with five existing buildings and some 17 companies currently operating in the zone.

ProductFILES

New tamarind candy

GRAB A PACK OF MONIEGOLD CHEWY Tamarind Candy and savor the authentic taste of Thai Tamarind candy. This great tasting candy is made from fresh tamarind and prepared according to the authentic royal recipe. It's a treat that the whole family will enjoy. Moniegold Chewy Tamarind candy is available in all SM Snack Exchange, SM Supermarket, Robinsons Supermarket, Shopwise, Mini Stop convenience stores and other leading stores. Moniegold Chewy Tamarind Candy is exclusively distributed by Henrich Food Products (411-2387).

Bits & Clips

'Perfectly amazing' deal

JVC, SMART AND MOTOROLA HAVE LAUNCHED "A Perfectly Amazing Deal" promo. Buyers of any 21" (508 mm), 25" (600 mm) or 29" (676 mm) JVC flat TV can get the new Motorola C139 colored phone for only P499, with a free Smart Buddy prepaid SIM and a TV rack to boot. Every purchase of JVC CTV models entitles buyers to one promo voucher, which must be presented along with the sales invoice and valid identification to get the Motorola C139 for just P499 from any Smart Wireless Center nationwide. The promo is ongoing until June 30 and will apply to cash and installment purchases.

Fuji Xerox promo

FUJI XEROX PRINTERS (FXP), THE WORLD-wide leader in printing innovation and pioneers in laser printing technology, launches the "Fuji Xerox After Summer Photo Contest 2006", which runs only until June 7. The contest is open to professional and amateur photo enthusiasts aged 18 years old and above. To join, just send in your "one-of-a-kind" original summer photos with the proper caption to fxpphotocontest@gmail.com. No purchase is necessary. Deadline for submission of entries is 12 noon of June 7. There is no limit to the number of entries one can send, but a contest participant may only win once. The winning entries will be announced on June 10, with the top 10 entries receiving P2,000 worth of Lulu Castagnette gift certificates. For more information, call American Technologies Inc at 723-0601.

Autodesk Solution Day

AUTODESK INC ANNOUNCED THAT ITS ANNUAL conference platform, Autodesk Solution Day, will be held on June 6 at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel. Now into its 4th year, it will showcase new technologies and best practices aimed at helping local designers in the manufacturing, mapping, civil engineering, building, construction, media and entertainment industries bring great ideas into reality sooner. Themed "Accelerate Your Ideas", Autodesk Solution Day 2006 will tour the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia. Registration for Autodesk Solution Day is free at http://asean.autodesk.com/solutionday. Delegates will receive attractive door gifts, and can stand to win over P300,000 worth of lucky draw prizes such as laptops, digital cameras and MP3 players.

'Baons' with a passion

IT'S BACK-TO-SCHOOL TIME—AND TIME TO prepare some healthy lunchbox meals for your kids! The best baon is not only nutritious and quick to prepare, but also fun and easy to eat. To help parents meet the challenge of preparing the right school lunch and snack foods, Cocina Argentina, the culinary club of Pacific Meat Company Inc (PMCI), lets homemakers discover the many innovative recipes that kids will certainly love through its "Lunchbox Attack" lifestyle class on June 7, 2 to 4 p.m. at the Century Culinary Circle, Unit 107 of Ortigas Bazaar Building, Ortigas Town Center, Doña J. Vargas, Pasig City. For more information on Cocina Argentina's lifestyle class themes and schedules, call 637-1028 or e-mail cocinaargentina@yahoo.com.

CLASSIFIEDS

DBP Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines is inviting interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **Supply and Delivery of Sports Utility Vehicle (4x4) Pick-up:**

Vehicle Type	Units	Approved Budget *	Cost of Bid Documents
"Four wheel all terrain or sport utility type 4x4 Pick-up double cab vehicle with heavy duty chassis and body. Engine with displacement of 2800 cc. but not exceeding 3500 cc, Turbo intercooled diesel, 5 speed M/T, Power Steering, Alloy magwheels (5 pcs.), spare tire with cable lock, Brakes front ventilated disc and rear drum, ABS with EBD, All Power features (doors/windows), Standard interior/exterior features equipped., Safety features with airbag, Multi-directional Fog lamps and Security features equipped with remote keyless entry with alarm, Side step board, Seatbelt (front/rear), Headrest (front/rear), Airconditioning System with multiple vents, standard tools, AM/FM stereo cassette with CD player, Tint (one-way), Warranty (1 year). Free LTO registration, sunshield matting, EWD, seat cover."	6	P 7,980,000.00	P 5,000.00

* Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening

Expected Date of Delivery: August 2006
Schedule of Activities:

Particulars	Date	Venue
Pre-Bidding Conference	June 21, 2006 (Wednesday) at 10:00 a.m.	6th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City
Submission of Eligibility Requirement Documents, Technical and Financial Proposals	"On or before" 9:00 a.m. of July 5, 2006 (Thursday)	BAC Secretariat, 6th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City
Opening of Eligibility Requirement Documents, Technical and Financial Proposals (Prospective Bidders are encouraged to attend this activity)	July 5, 2006 (Thursday) at 10:30 a.m.	6th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, and is restricted to Filipino citizens or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest belonging to citizens of the Philippines and **must be authorized car dealer**. Only Bids from Bidders who passed the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall undergo the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post-qualification procedure.

Interested parties may download these forms at www.devbankphil.com.ph and at the Electronic Procurement Service of the Department of Budget and Management. Prospective bidders may secure the bid documents and Eligibility Requirement Forms from the BAC Secretariat, 6th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City, upon payment of a **non-refundable fee of Php 5,000.00.**

The Bank reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For further inquiries, please call telephone numbers 8125702/8189511 loc. 2610.

Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – June 5 & 12, 2006)

PHILIPPINE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS NAVAL LOGISTICS CENTER
Fort San Felipe, Cavite City

02 June 2006

INVITATION TO BID

The Philippine Navy is inviting interested proponent to purchase thru public bidding on "as is where is basis" the following unserviceable equipment, machineries, vehicles and assorted scrap:

Nomenclature	Location	Date/Time		Price of Application Form
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline for Submission/ Opening of Bids	
Lot 1 Unserviceable Assorted Equipment and Machineries (WMR-PN-008-05)	Naval Logistics Center, FSF, Cavite City	9:00 AM June 07, 2006 (Wednesday)	9:00 AM June 14, 2006 (Wednesday)	Php 500.00
Lot 2 Assorted Scrap Iron Consisting: ICE, GSM, Electrical/Electronics Spare parts (WMR-PN-009-05)	Naval Logistics Center FSF, Cavite City			Php 500.00
Lot 3 Unuseable/Used Oil (Approximately 39,480 ltrs) (WMR-PN-004-05)	Naval Petroleum Depot Sangley Pt., Cavite City			Php 500.00
Lot 4 Fishing Boat (FB-1503) (WMR-PN-010-04)	Back of HNSSC, FSF, Cavite City			Php 500.00
Lot 5 Fishing Boat (1501) (WMR-PN-009-04)	Back of HNSSC, FSF Cavite City	9:00 AM June 07, 2006 (Wednesday)	9:00 AM June 14, 2006 (Wednesday)	Php 500.00
Lot 6 One (1) unit Unserviceable Small Craft: FB Calypso (WMR-PN-012-05)	Back of HNSSC, FSF Cavite City			Php 500.00
Lot 7 Ex-BRP Catanduanes (PG-62) (WMR-PN-006-03)	Back of HNSSC, FSF Cavite City			Php 500.00
Lot 8 Two (2) units Unserviceable Small Craft: LCM-281/LCM-279 (WMR-PN-009-03)	Back of HNSSC, FSF Cavite City			Php 500.00

All interested proponents are advised to attend the Pre-Bid meeting on June 07, 2006 aboard Multi-Purpose Hall, Naval Sea System Command (NASSCOM), Fort San Felipe, Cavite City.

For other particulars, please contact the Secretariat, Philippine Navy Disposal Committee (PNDC) at Naval Logistics Center, Fort San Felipe, Cavite City or call (046) 431-0204.

FOR THE CHAIRMAN, PNDC

(Sgd.) CDR EULOGIO P LUTERIA PN
Secretariat, PNDC

(PDI–June 4, 5 & 6, 2006)

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Intel dreams of digital content in RP

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

A PC THAT CAN STREAM MUSIC wirelessly, play DVDs in a home theater environment with the use of an infrared controller and even work as a TV and record shows on a preset schedule straight out of the cable service. The PC itself is no bigger than a chocolate box and could pass itself off as a jewelry case.

Intel's dream of a digital home is nearly complete especially as the company's original design manufacturing partners are integrating new Intel Pentium Duo dual-core processors in some of the world's smallest desktop computer form factors. Some of these PCs can now serve as a central multimedia entertainment system as well as for business purposes.

THE HOME entertainment system faces a converged future

In addition, the Microsoft Windows Media Center operating system allows full control of a computer without the need for a mouse and keyboard so even non-technical people could use the PC for watching TV while browsing the Internet or checking e-mail.

But while Intel and some of its partners provide the hardware that makes digital life happen, where is the content that will draw people into fully utilizing their multimedia entertainment PCs? In most cases, these small form factor PCs would still do the same simple things that their bigger brothers do such as browsing the Internet, downloading, playing video games or burning optical media.

Intel Microelectronics Philippines Country Manager Ricky Banaag said that they are in talks with some content providers in the Philippines for the digital content. Though he did not specify which companies those were, he said Intel aims to complete the overall digital home cycle by creating an environment where content developers and providers would start offering digital content for the market.

"It's also a good way for people to use broadband Internet. When they know there's rich content available for them on the Internet, they'll move out of dial-up and get broadband connection instead," Banaag said.

Having digital content on the Internet is also a driver for telecommunications companies to expand their broadband services, which could push down prices as demand increases.

"Intel would always go for digital content because that is where the future is going," Banaag said.

USAID group drafting new RP ICT roadmap

Erwin Oliva
INQ7.net

THE ECONOMIC MODERNIZATION through Efficient Reforms and Governance Enhancement (Emerge), a United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded group, is helping draft the new strategic roadmap for the Philippine information and communications technology industry, a government official said.

The new ICT roadmap will update the old roadmap developed by the defunct Information Technology and E-commerce Council in 2003, said Ramon Sales, chair of the Commission on Information and Communications Technology.

The new Philippine ICT roadmap, which is a "consultative" document, is scheduled to be presented publicly Monday to private sector and government stakeholders.

Speaking before the US-Asean Business Council, the CICT chair said that the new draft ICT roadmap will push more citizen-centric government services; will support a policy wherein government will be the enabler-catalyst of ICT development in the country; and promote the idea of ICT as a tool for sustainable development, among others.

It will also promote the development of more digital content in government to give local citizens access to information important to them.

The draft ICT roadmap will also push for the rationalization of agencies under its wing, according to Sales.

"CICT needs to transform itself into a strong organization to facilitate development," he added.

CICT is currently overseeing the rationalization activities at the Telecommunications Office (Telof).

Telof currently employs close to 5,000 people spread across 117 regions in the country, the official said.

Sales said that the rationalization program is offering retirement packages to employees who would voluntarily retire, while some will be realigned to other agencies.

He said that the rationalization program intends to reduce the headcount of Telof to at least 1,500, whom the CICT will absorb.

"We're not laying off anyone," Sales stressed, assuring that all government employees affected by the ongoing rationalization will not be forced to leave.

Sales said that Telof employees will undergo a reassessment of skills to determine where CICT could best fit them.

Some employees will go to the maintenance of the Telof network, while others will be realigned to other agencies or deployed in other government projects, he added.

US wants ICT department created, says CICT chair

By Erwin Oliva
INQ7.net

THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT wants the Philippines to have a Department of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), according to Ramon Sales, chair of the Commission on Information and Communications Technology (CICT) in a briefing with reporters.

Sales revealed his recent discussions with US representatives who reiterated that the Philippines is just one of many countries in the Southeast Asian region that has no single government body overseeing activities in the ICT industry.

Created through an Executive Order 269, the CICT currently exists as an interim body to the planned Department of Information and Communications Technology.

The House of Representatives has a pending bill seeking the creation of the DICT.

Sales said two issues have emerged with regard to the creation of this ICT super-body. The first involves the need to create the department to assure the continued growth of the local high-tech industry led by the booming business process outsourcing (BPO) industry.

"Is it necessary to elevate the CICT to a DICT so that the contributions of the ICT to the country's economy will be assured?" Sales posed the question.

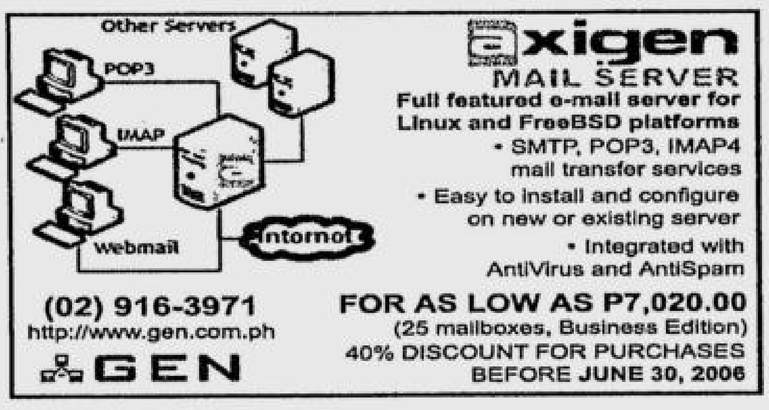
Despite the absence of the planned ICT department, the Philippine BPO industry has generated around $1.8 billion in revenues in 2006 alone. It is expected to grow to $12.8 billion in 2010, the government official said.

On the other end, Sales views the DICT as an important factor in integrating all government ICT activities and infrastructure.

"The real mission of the DICT is to integrate ICT in government," he added.

Since 1998, lawmakers have tried to push measures to create the DICT but have failed.

Under former CICT chair Virgilio Peña, the proposed department was revived while several lawmakers, in particular Rep. Simeon Kintanar who is now chair of House ICT committee, have co-authored bills to support the bid to create this government body.



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Republic of the Philippines
City Government of Zamboanga
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
City Hall, Zamboanga City
Tel. No (062) 992-7763

Solicitation No. Goods 06-0605-180

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Job-Order: Labor and Materials Thermoplastic Markings
(Name of Project)

Various Traffic Light Intersection, Various Road, Streets and Avenues et.al.
(Brief Description of GOODS)

1. The **City Government of Zamboanga** through the **General Fund 2006** intend to apply the sum of **TWO MILLION SIX HUNDRED NINETY NINE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED SEVENTY THREE PESOS (P2,699,973.00) ONLY** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract **Job Order: Labor and Materials Thermoplastic Markings (PR No. 100-06-05-1152)**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The **City Government of Zamboanga** now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for **Various Traffic Light Intersection, Various Road, Streets and Avenues et.al...** Delivery of the GOODS is required for **Thirty (30) working days**. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. **Prospective Bidder should have undertaken similar projects within the last five (5) years w/an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding.**
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the law or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from **City Government of Zamboanga – Procurement, Acquisition and Award Division** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from **8:00 am to 5:00 pm starting June 05-21, 2006.**
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of P1,000.00. The method of payment will be **Cash payable to the City Treasurers Office.** The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The City Government will hold **a Pre-Bid Conference** open to all interested parties on **June 08, 2006; 10:00 AM** at the **City Engineers Conference Room.**
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **10:00 AM June 19, 2006.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of **Check, Certified Check, Cashier's Check or Manager's Check** payable to the City Treasurer. Bank Draft or Irrevocable Letter of Credit and in the amount of **P28,999.73** or **Bank Guarantee in the amount of P40,499.60 or Surety Bond in the amount of P67,499.33** or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on **June 19, 2006 at 10:00 AM in the City Engineers Conference Room, City Hall, Z.C.** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
9. **To be delivered in the Office of the City Engineer.**
10. The City Government of Zamboanga reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Procurement, Acquisition & Award Division
Milagros W.S. Saavedra
City Hall, N.S. Valderosa St., Z.C.
Telefax: 992-7763 or 991-0802

(Sgd.) **MARIO D. ARRIOLA (DVM)**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – June 5 & 12 2006)

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Republic of the Philippines

6CB-GSC-047

PURCHASE OF VARIOUS VEHICLES
(Name of Project)

4 Items of Various Vehicle (pls see also details @ www.gensantos.gov.ph)

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City, through the CY 2006 Annual Budget intends to apply the sum of **Two Million Five Hundred Seventy Thousand Pesos (P2,570,000.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Purchase of Various Vehicle. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Purchase of Various Vehicle. Delivery of the GOODS is required by **30 calendar days.** The description of an eligible bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Goverment Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsive of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the **Local Government Unit of General Santos City** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **P1,000.00** to the City Treasure's Office. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative.

The Local Government of Unit of General Santos will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested on **June 15, 2006, 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon at the BAC Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City.**

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **2:00 o'clock in the afternoon of June 27, 2006.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit equivalent to One Percent (1%) of ABC or Bank Guarantee equivalent to One and a Half Percent (1½%) of ABC or Surety Bond equivalent to Two and a half Percent (2½%) of ABC or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on **2:00 o'clock in the afternoon of June 27, 2006 at the BAC Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City.** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Bids and Awards Committee
Gina Y. Pigar
2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City
Tel. Nos. (083) 301-0553, (083) 302-7210
Fax: (083) 301-0563
website address:www.gensantos.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **NAEL JOSEPH D. CRUSPERO**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – June 5 & 12, 2006)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Construction Management (CM) Consultancy Services for the BSP Branch Building in Zamboanga

The Scope of Construction Management work includes among others quantity surveying services, preparation of detailed estimates, value engineering, full construction management and supervision for the proposed BSP Branch Building in Zamboanga.

1. The **Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas**, through the BSP 2006 Building Construction Account intends to apply the sum of **three million two hundred fifty thousand pesos** (P3,250,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for BAC-INFRA-06-07. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening of the financial proposals.
2. **The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas** now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and short listing for the construction management consultancy services. Interested consultants must submit their LOIs and accomplished Eligibility Documents on or before 23 June 2006 / 11:30 AM at the BAC Secretariat, Room 204, 2nd Floor, Five Storey Building, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Sts. Manila. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. Eligibility documents may be obtained from the BAC Secretariat on June 06 to 19, 2006 for a non-refundable fee of P500.00, Room 204, 2nd Floor, Five Storey Building at the BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Streets, Manila. Only those that are short listed will be entitled to submit bids.
3. The BAC shall draw up the short list of consultants from those who have submitted Letters of Intent and have been determined as eligible both in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A). The short list of eligible bidders shall consist of up to five (5) consultants.

   The firm's applicable experience (**completed comparable and related consultancy services and know cases of prior performance**) shall be used as criteria for short listing.
4. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to Filipino citizens or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only bids from short listed consultants will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in the Eligibility Documents. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 the contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

   The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas shall evaluate bids using the **Quality-Cost Based Evaluation** procedure. The criteria and rating system for the evaluation of bids shall be provided in the Instructions to Bidders.
5. The minimum eligibility requirements are as follows:
   - 5.1 The consultant must have been in operation for the last fifteen (15) years (reckoned from the date of the first advertisement/posting of this invitation) engaging in the lawful practice of the type of consulting services called for in this invitation.
   - 5.2 The consultant must have rendered within the last ten (10) years (reckoned from the date of the first advertisement/posting of this invitation) Construction Management consultancy services for at least five (5) completed new construction projects of similar nature/magnitude/complexity as the proposed BSP projects and must be able to submit a certification of satisfactory performance from the client for at least three (3) of the required five (5) projects.
   - 5.3 The principal or Managing Officer must be a Registered Architect or Engineer with at least fifteen (15) years experience in actual construction work and construction management.
   - 5.4 The Project Manager for the projects must be a registered Architect or Civil Engineer with a minimum of fifteen (15) years experience in actual construction work five (5) years of which are in construction management.
   - 5.5 The Resident Construction Management Team should at least be Registered Architects/Engineers, each with a minimum of ten (10) years combined design/construction management and construction experience where the Construction Management experience should at least be five (5) years. The minimum number required for the team should at least be three (3) excluding the principal and project manager.
   - 5.6 In case of a joint venture, a valid joint venture agreement shall be required. The joint venture must have rendered construction management consultancy services for at least two (2) completed projects of similar magnitude as the proposed BSP project.
   - 5.7 A consultant with at least two (2) on-going and/or awarded BSP consultancy projects at the time of this invitation will not be allowed to participate in this consultancy service requirement.
   - 5.8 For those firms with previous or current Design Consultancy Services with the BSP, a certificate of satisfactory performance issued by the Bank must be submitted.
6. For inquiries, please call **BAC Secretariat - telephone no. 524-7011 local 3143.**
7. **The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas** reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) **JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI – June 5 & 16, 2006)

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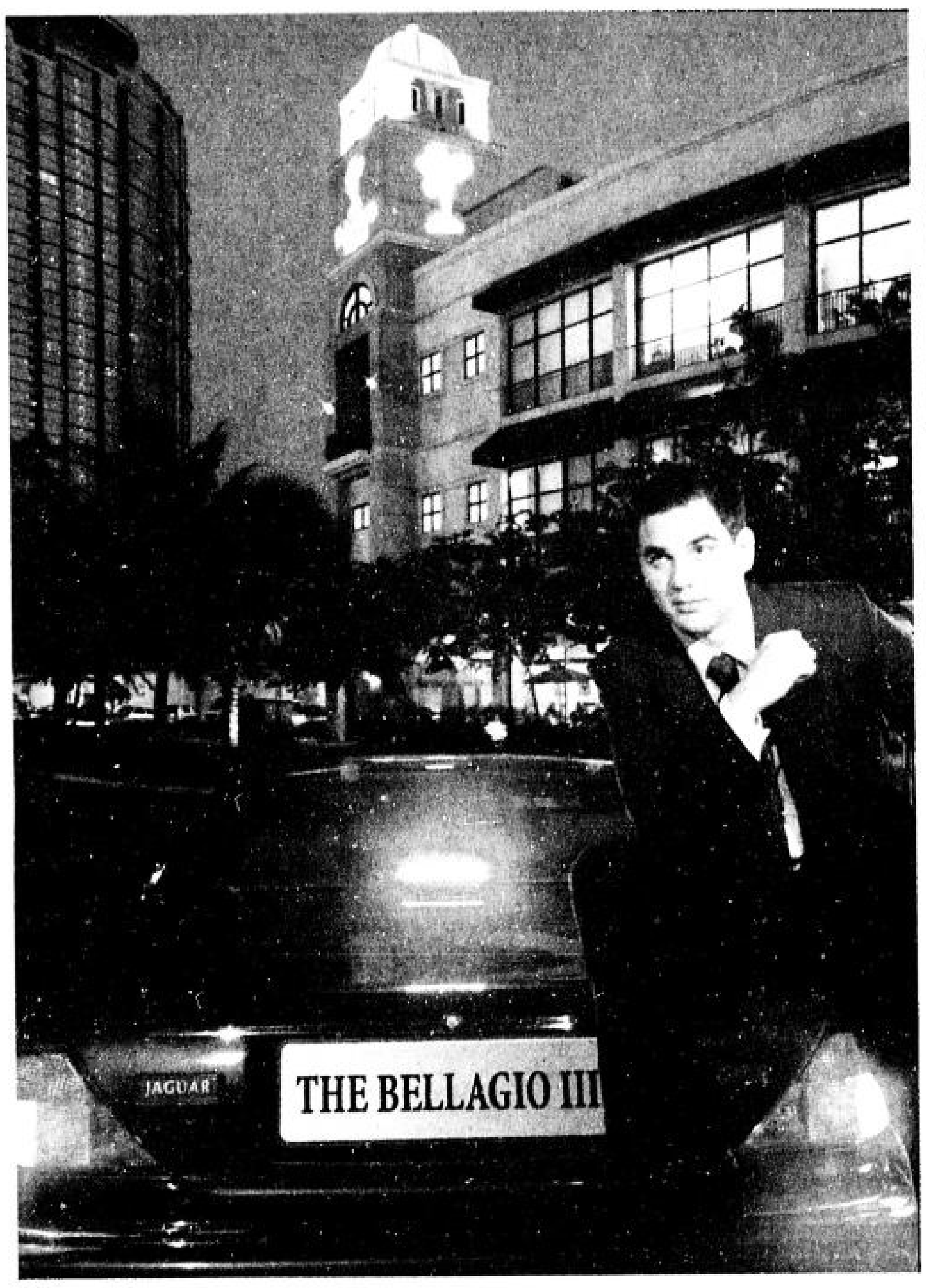
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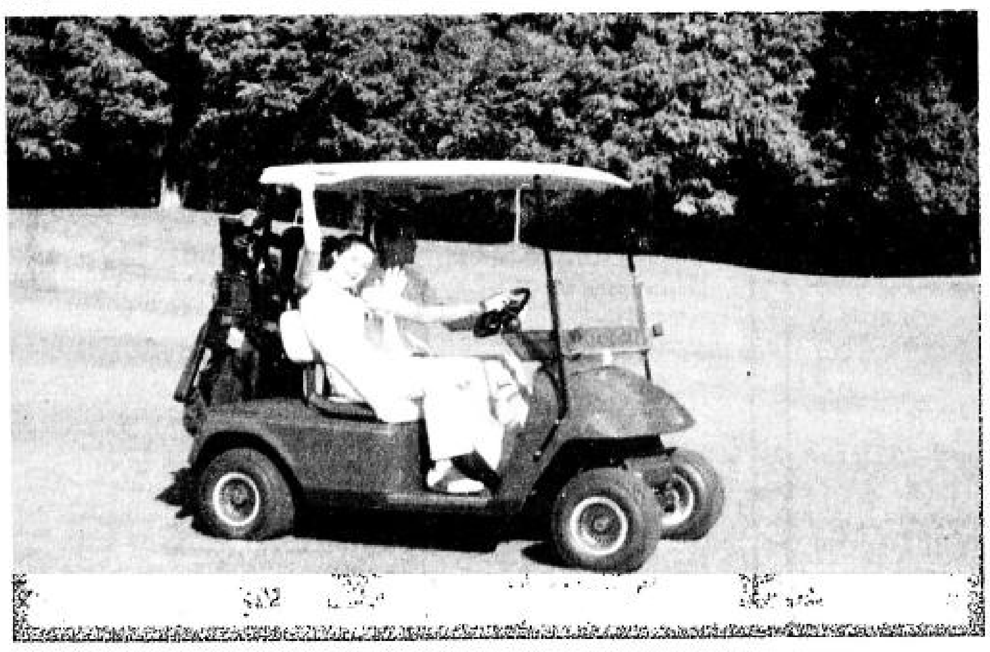

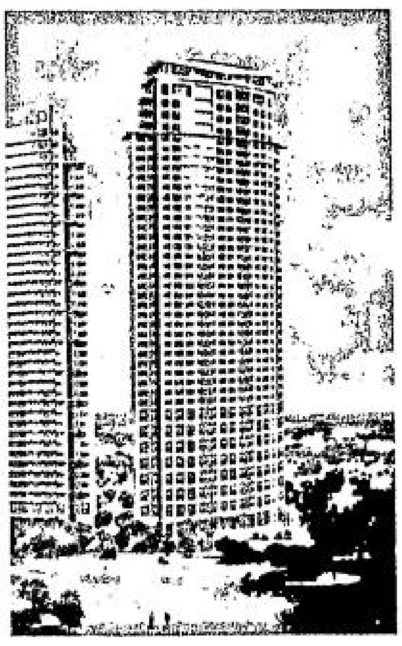

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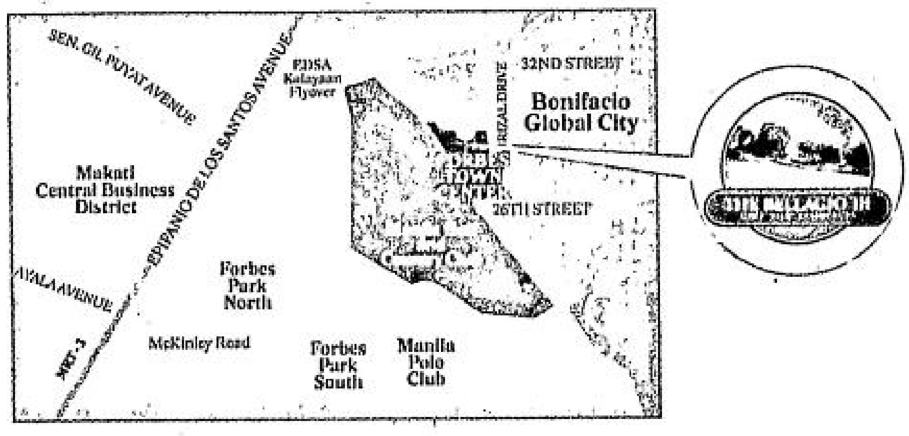
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BUSINESS Monday

Business Features Editor **Margie Quimpo-Espino**

Good writing builds good business

Gurus list 10 characteristics of effective business letters

By Edna Flor M. delos Santos
Contributor

WHAT WILL YOU DO IF YOU RECEIVE A LETTER that reads: "Your failure to remit your annual payment on your life insurance policy as of this date leave us no other recourse but to consider taking drastic action against you." Upon receiving that letter, my lady friend gave the insurance agency manager a taste of a scorned woman's fury. She dared him to do just what he said he would do in his letter. She was ready to go to court. So offended she was that she thought of terminating her relationship with this insurance agency.

This customer may have a reason to stop patronizing the services of this company.

The collection letter has sloppiness written all over it, which reduces the trustworthiness of the agency.

Its information was incorrect (the lady paid her premium on time); the tone was discourteous; it was we-oriented although it uses the pronoun "you"; it was wordy (leave us no other recourse); grammar is flawed (uses leave instead of leaves, the subject "failure" being singular); and it was unclear and vague (what drastic action?).

That it received a negative response from the reader would not surprise seasoned letter writers who are aware of the rules of writing effective business letters.

How many business opportunities are ruined because of badly-written correspondence?

Effective communication, whether written or oral, builds good business. Well-written letters sell products. But more than that, they sell the company's name.

Aware of the impact on business of effective writing, employers in other countries and in the Philippines spend large sums of money to train their employees on writing that produces results.

Business writing gurus say there are 10 characteristics of effective business letters.

1. CONCISENESS. Conveying the message in the fewest number of words and sentences as possible. Brevity is the rule of thumb.

"If your letter can't be read and understood in less than 20 seconds, it has limited chances of success. It used to be 30—this time limit gets shorter every year," one expert said.

To achieve this, the writer must eliminate wordy and trite expressions. Simple and one-syllable words are packed with the same power as three-syllable words or phrases.

Also, the active voice gives the letter the wallop it needs to deliver the message forcefully.

2. CLARITY. As a writer, you hit bull's eye if your reader understands what you have to say. Precise and familiar words are the tricks in your bag. Jargon, slang and colloquialisms serve no purpose because they cause confusion.

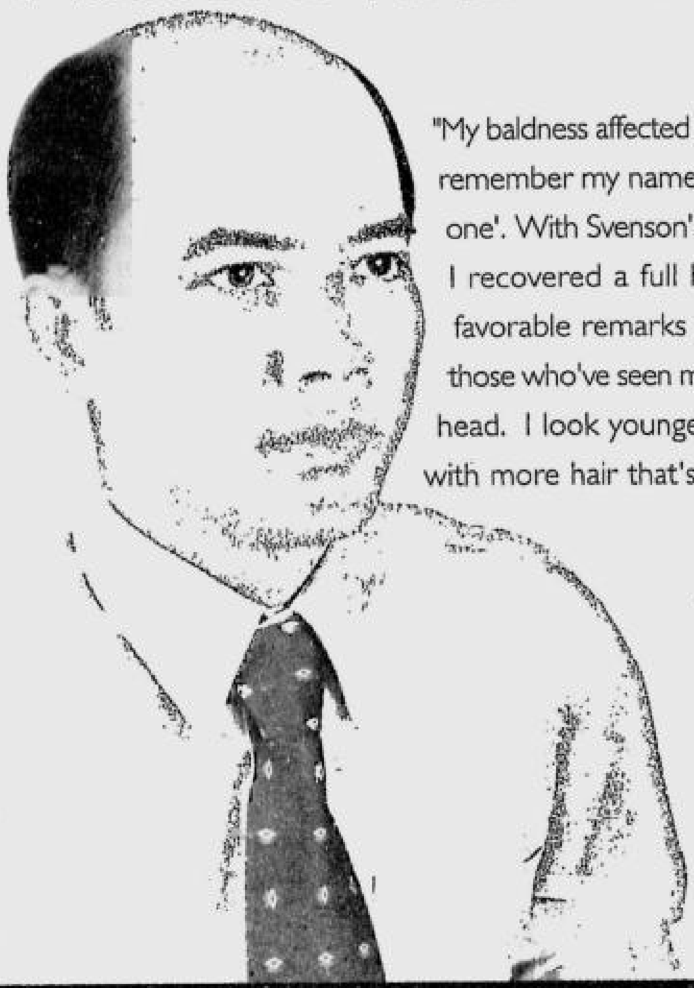
For example, the jargon "spoilage" conveys different meanings to wet market vendors (rotten vegetables or fruits) and to the airline industry (empty seats). When it comes to sentence length, no matter how inspired you are, don't go beyond 20 words.

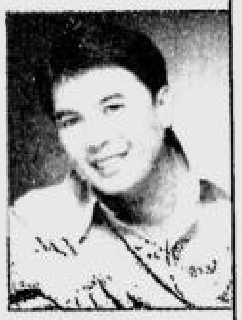
3. CONSIDERATION of the readers' interest, needs and circumstances. It is writing from their point of view and how they will benefit from the content of the message. The customer will appreciate the change in policy better if the benefits of such a change are personalized.

4. COMPLETENESS is presenting in the letter all the facts that the reader needs, to make a sound decision on your message. One way is to answer the 5 Ws and 1H questions.

For instance, to order a refrigerator, make clear what model, size and color you want, when you need it, to whom and where it will be sent, why you have chosen that company,

GOOD/ B2-2





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With a lot of help from BPI Family Savings Bank, Sally San Jose of Davao City discovered the perfect recipe for a successful restaurant and catering business.

All Mrs. Sally dela Cruz San Jose wanted was to have a small business that would give her time to personally take care of her children. With her talent, creativity and passion for cooking, she got what she wanted... and so much more.

"I opened a carinderia in front of our rented apartment in 1986. We called it Chippens. Dahil sa word of mouth, my eatery became popular", Mrs. San Jose happily recalled. It was the start of something big. She ventured into the catering business in 1990, and it became successful.

The economic crisis in 1998 was a big hurdle in the growth of her business. Expansion was put to a halt. But in 2002, she finally decided to avail of a BPI Family Savings Bank Grow Your SME Business Loan.

"To my surprise, it offered affordable rates and easy terms. It gave me back my confidence to grow my business", she continues. With the loan granted to her, she was able to finally expand Chippens to a 250-seater buffet restaurant in Roxas Ave., Davao.

"Laking tulong ng BPI Family Savings Bank *sa Chippens"*, Mrs. San Jose said, as she proudly scanned her huge restaurant teeming with satisfied customers.

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Corporate governance at the PSE

WE CANNOT JUST PAY LIP SERvice to good corporate governance, because our ability to bring in more investments to the stock market, the ability of these investments to open new or additional enterprises, for these enterprises to offer new jobs to hundreds of thousands of Filipino workers, and for these inter-related activities to foster economic growth, all of these will depend in a way on improvements in OUR good corporate governance front.

I remember that almost a year ago ... our respected chair of the Institute for Corporate Directors, Dr. Jesus Estanislao, released the results of a survey, which was earlier conducted by the ICD and the Capital Market Development Council or CMDC.

While I was preparing this presentation, one observation that Dr. Estanislao had made that day ... flashed back to my mind.

It was about the relationship between the four listed companies that topped the good corporate governance survey and their price performance in the stock market.

Dr. Estanislao said, and I quote: "We have found a positive relationship, but I must emphasize that as expected that positive relationship is small. But IT IS there, and our task over the next few years is to build on it and make it all that much more significant." End of quote.

SMALL. That was the observation that Dr. Estanislao made last year, but ladies and gentlemen, I have reason to believe that Dr. Estanislao and all of us here need not wait for a long, long time for good governance to make, not just a small but a SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE to the market performance of listed companies that diligently observe good corporate governance.

I asked our research department to revisit the prices of the four companies that topped the survey last year. Let me caution you all that what we did was just a cursory survey, which still require further study. But offhand, I have some interesting information to share with you all.

Our research people revisited the prices of Ayala Land, BPI, Petron Corp. and PLDT last year as well as in the first quarter of this year. And here are the results.

The stock prices of three of the four firms went up by more than 35 to 38 percent or more than double the average increase of the index for 2005.

Petron, which closed at P3.25 a share in 2004, went up to P4.50 in 2005 or by 38.5 percent, which was the highest rate of growth in prices among the four reviewed companies last year.

Then we have Ayala Land. Its price closed at P7.30 a share in 2004 and advanced by 35.6 percent to P9.90 last year.

Look at PLDT. From P1,360 in 2004 it went up by 35 percent to P1,835 a share in 2005.

I remember that, in an earlier forum hosted by the Management Association of the Philippines, I mentioned a Credit Lyonnais study, which showed that firms with strong governance practices had a 34-percent return on capital employed.

A recent presentation by the US Securities and Exchange Commission International Institute for Securities Market Development also showed that investors are willing to pay between 12 to 30 percent premium for corporate governance.

If all the doubting Thomases in the corporate world will see these figures ... they probably would become instant disciples of good governance.

But I have to caution you all that I have to further test the results by finding out how the other listed companies in the PSE performed last year. It's quite possible that some other listed firms performed better than the three.

Anyway, you are probably asking: "What about BPI?"

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Francisco Ed. Lim

BPI posted the slowest growth in prices among the four companies we reviewed. From P52.50 a share in 2004, its price went up to P54.50 or by less than 4 percent in 2005.

As earlier mentioned BPI closed at P54.50 last year, but in the first quarter of the year, it surged to P62.50.

That means the stock went up in just one quarter by almost 15 percent ... or roughly three times the 4.8-percent rate of increase of the PSEi and twice the 6.8-percent pace of growth of the financial sector for the quarter.

At the end of the first quarter, the stock price of Ayala Land went up further to P11.25 per share or 13.6 percent higher than its price at the end of 2005.

That of PLDT inched up to P1,925 or by almost 5 percent, BUT the stock price of Petron retreated to P4.40 per share or by 2.2 percent.

So, the question that races through our minds now is: Why the mixed performance of these top four adherents of good corporate governance?

Many analysts and economists have pointed out that a lot of other factors influence the movement of stocks. Even Dr. Estanislao made the same observation last year.

And we at the PSE fully agree with such observations. That's why in our own modest way, we continue to pursue reforms from within the stock exchange.

The reforms we have in mind are related also to good corporate governance, because we want to set a good example for the other listed companies to follow.

A recurring issue revolves around family-owned or -controlled corporations. There are valid questions about governance among these firms, because studies have noted that, when a director-owner of a company is confronted by situations where his or her interest conflicts with that of other stockholders, the director-owner will sacrifice the interest of the others.

Let me repeat some of our new policies at the Philippine Stock Exchange related to such a conflict-of-interest situation.

We have, for example, come out with stringent disclosure rules that apply even to non-listed companies. These rules apply, if information about these non-listed firms has a material effect on the business and price of the listed affiliates or sister company.

In many stock markets, issues about undue advantage in trading based on inside information remain a worry.

We at the PSE are addressing such a concern by coming out with stringent disclosure rules... like the one we call the "Blackout Rule."

This regulation prohibits directors or officers of a listed company from trading their company's own shares right after they obtain material non-public information. The ban will last for two days even after they made the proper disclosure of the information to the Exchange.

Then we have the selective "Disclosure Rule," and it prohibits an issuer from disclosing material non-public information to a selected group of persons, like a director or officer, without simultaneously disclosing the same information to the Exchange.

Listed companies are likewise required to disclose within 10 minutes from receipt or occurrence any material information, such as a corporate act, development or event, that affects the price of the stock in the market.

This is done through our Online Disclosure System, a facility that allows the prompt and simultaneous electronic dissemination of corporate disclosures and announcements to investors, trading participants and the general public via the PSE website. This allows the investing public to access corporate disclosures 24/7.

You may also ask the question: What is PSE doing about its own corporate governance structure? The answer is: A LOT! And EXPECT MORE!

Unlike before, where the Board of Directors of the PSE was dominated by the brokers, eight members of the PSE's 15-man Board of Directors are non-brokers and three of them are independent directors.

Last year, the Exchange reached a milestone in its 79-year history when the Board elected Peter Favila as its first independent non-broker director as chairman.

Favila has since joined the government as Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry, but he was replaced by another prominent independent director—retired Supreme Court Associate Justice Jose Vitug.

Last year also marked the first time in the history of the Exchange that both its president and chairman are non-brokers.

Early this month ... retired Justice Vitug and I were reelected to our posts with the mandate to pursue more reforms. We have to pursue these reforms, because we cannot be complacent, and we have to show a good example to the business community in espousing change in protecting investors.

Quietly but resolutely ... we have given our independent directors in our board an expanded role. The PSE Board assigned the additional powers that were over and above those mandated by SEC rules and regulation.

So with an independent chairman in our audit committee we want to deliver a clear message that we do not countenance financial window-dressing.

Although not required by the SEC, our Compensation and Remuneration Committee is also chaired by an independent director for the sake of transparency in pegging our own salaries and allowances.

But I guess our campaign to gain more practitioners of good corporate governance will require us to work harder.

Of course, I've said it before and I say it again now: I believe that there will come a time when good governance practices will become OUR SECOND NATURE.

But to develop that habit requires us all to think of ways to make our crusade more palatable to the doubting Thomases out there.

We also have to answer the myriad of questions raised on corporate governance.

For example, why do some of our colleagues still believe that corporate governance standards in Asia and the Philippines should recognize the reality that it is the family council that decides, with the Board as the concurring legal entity?

Also, others still argue that it is impractical to keep an independent director in the board of a small corporation.

Of course, the more fundamental questions: Is corporate governance a chicken and egg question? Do we have to start with good governance from the ranks of our business executives or from the ranks in government... in the judiciary... in our Legislative body or in our law enforcement units?

These are all food for thought in our interesting times. Whatever the answer is... I believe the PSE cannot find the answer alone and without the help of other well-meaning groups like the ICD.

(The author is president and CEO of the PSE. This was delivered by the author in a recent forum of the Institute for Corporate Directors. The MAP Secretariat and the author may be reached via mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

MOVEMENT

DAP has new CEO

THE DEVELOPMENT Academy of the Philippines (DAP), a government owned and controlled corporation (GOCC) under the Office of the President of the Philippines mandated to provide training, education, research and consulting services to government and other development stakeholders, has a new chief executive officer.

The DAP Board of Trustees (BOT) chair, Jimmy T. Yaokasin Jr., announced the election and appointment of Antonio D. Kalaw Jr. as the 7th president of DAP.

Kalaw, 53, is a qualified career executive service officer (Ceso), and the most senior DAP officer. He rose from the ranks going through a wide range of experiences in government service and nongovernment organizations for 31 years performing concurrent roles, functions and positions, willing and available to be considered for the position. He studied in the University of the Philippines where he finished college and took up masteral courses in public administration. He started in DAP in 1975.

It was during his 14 years stint as director/resident manager of DAP Tagaytay when Kalaw acquired his business acumen in revenue generation and human and logistical resource management.

Good writing . . .

From page B2-1

and how payment will be made.

When the data are incomplete, you either frustrate your readers or you bring them to the point of inaction. A sure sale turns stale.

5. CONCRETENESS means being specific, definite and vivid rather than vague and general. Specific facts and figures add vividness.

Also in this picture, the main actors are the verbs, not the nouns, not the infinitives. For instance, instead of saying "The function of this office is the collection of payments" say "This office collects payments."

6. COURTESY is an expression of respect and concern for others. Tact and appreciativeness will carry the day for the writers and the banner for the companies they represent.

Irritating expressions (contrary to your inference, delinquency, I'm sure you must realize, we find it difficult to believe, you are probably ignorant of the fact, you failed to, you leave us no choice, etc.) are taboos. Language that discriminates on the basis of gender, disability, age, race, religion, ethnicity or nationality produces unpleasantness and ill will.

7. COHERENCE means correctly arranging words and sentences so that the ideas flow logically and smoothly. Every statement must move the ideas forward. Some devices used to achieve coherence are repetition of a key word, use of synonyms, use of transitional phrases, use of pointers (this, that) and use of sentence patterns ("Some people ask why. I ask why not.")

8. CORRECTNESS rests on accurate figures and facts, and on flawless grammar, punctuation and spelling.

9. CREDIBILITY refers to the status of the communicator, whether as himself or as representative of the company. As a message sender, you must write information that is true and believable. The letter must sound sincere and honest, anchored on the company's good reputation in the industry, which should have been built over the years.

10. CONSISTENCY of tone and style within the letter reflects the writer's careful preparation and execution. From the opening sentence to the last word, you must use only one tone (light or serious?) and one style (formal or informal?). A shift in tone or style betrays the state of the mind or lack of skill of the writer.

The skill in writing effective business correspondence is the product of long and dedicated practice.

However, its payoffs to the organization come in various packages, some of which are profitable business, prestige in the community, widespread goodwill and respectable place in the industry.

(The author was the main lecturer at the "Effective Business Writing" Program conducted by UP Institute for Small-Scale Industries and the Small Enterprises Research and Development Foundation)

Shop taps franchise conversion to expand

WHAT FACTORS GIVE A RETAIL business the edge? Good products? Quality service? Clear business acumen? Innovative strategies?

"One of the main precepts for the success of any business has always been establishing strong partnerships," said Lee Gonzalo Perez, franchise marketing manager of Philippine Seven Corp., the country's of the 7-Eleven convenience store chain.

7-Eleven is a recognized brand worldwide and is now aggressively pursuing expansion via franchising and franchise conversion.

What most people don't know is that we've been offering 7-Eleven as a franchise since 1998," Perez said.

Philippine Seven Corp. has capitalized on its strong operational performance in the retail industry, transforming this into a franchise formula that is helping its partners profit from the partnership.

"Unlike other franchise systems, 7-Eleven is a joint venture, meaning that both Philippine Seven Corp. and the franchisee share expenses and the profits," Perez said. "We share in the cost of operations, but the franchisee gets the lion's share of the gross profits."

THE FAMILIAR façade of the country's first 24-hour convenience store.

Perez explained that the 7-Eleven partnership also translates into the strength of the 7-Eleven infrastructure, composed of computer on-line ordering, cash control, inventory control, manpower planning and reporting and information systems, which is designed to streamline store operations for the franchisees.

New franchisees experience "shadowing," a 7-Eleven coined term denoting the fielding of veteran store managers to assist and familiarize new store owners during the first months of operations.

Operational field consultants also conduct regular weekly visits for counseling, monitoring and evaluation of store performance.

Eleven started with one branch Edsa cor. Kamias, QC, to nearly 300 outlets in Metro Manila and key provinces in the country today. Of these stores, 40 percent are franchised, the rest are company owned.

Franchise conversion is another innovation introduced by Philippine Seven. Normally, franchise providers prefer to hold on to top performing stores, 7-Eleven does the opposite—allowing interested parties to invest in and operate an established store.

Under the franchise conversion system, franchisees who want to skip the process of creating a niche in the market and enjoy the benefits of an established store need only invest a bit more.

Aside from the franchise conversions, we are still opening up new markets in untapped areas of the country. This is done via our company-owned stores or through new store franchise," Perez said.

Areas available for franchise conversions are stores in Batangas, Laguna, Cavite, Manila, Quezon City, and major cities in Rizal.

Interested investors go through a seven-step qualification process which begins with the initial contact, followed by pre-qualification by the franchise manager, the preparation and submission of the business plan the interview by the approval committee.

Once the franchise contract has been signed, the franchisee undergoes a two-month intensive training program that ends with the turnover of the store.

For inquiries, call 726-9968 0920-9508651.

First outlet supercenter to rise in Laguna

MARIELA LUNA AND TONY Cancio negotiated with Adidas in 2003 and were the first ones given a franchise to an official outlet store.

The two opened shop outlet at the Paseo de Santa Rosa in Greenfield in Laguna.

The development has three phases with the Paseo 1 and Paseo 2 town centers already hosting to establishments like Chowking and Jollibee, Mercury Drug, and sporting good outlets Nike, Speedo, Dunlop, Puma and Adidas, among others.

Paseo 3 is being built as the first outlet supercenter.

Mariela explained that the Adidas store sells aged items at huge discounts. "Some of the items we get aren't display items; they are still brand new. They just weren't put on the floor because of overstock. We get them in original packaging. Since Adidas is a moving brand, sometimes we get our stocks quickly. As soon as the six months are up, it's in the stores already. The success of the store has made us believe in the outlet market."

According to Tony, "Maybe 50 percent of the products that we have there are 6 to 8 months. It's all still current; you'll see a lot of current stocks in Manila that are 40 percent discount at our Santa Rosa store."

Mariela added that the market is a high-end one, but is distinctly disparate. "These are highly mobile executives. You have the retirees also who go to their farms on the weekends. You have the families who like spending the weekends out of town. A lot of people have actually moved to Sta. Rosa because they have their homes and schools there."

"Before when we started, it was mostly transients," she said. "This is the main road that people use to go to Tagaytay and Batangas. It was mostly a weekend market. But as it became more known, and as people got used to the idea that we had quality items, we got a good local base. They have a good industrial area there and a lot of residents. Greenfield Development Corp. is touting the place as an outlet center."

Tony expounded on how different their customers are. During the weekends 70 to 80 percent of our customers are transients coming from Manila to th provinces and back again. Bu during weekdays, it's the reverse 70 percent of our customer would be people working aroun in the area," he said. "You have lot of multinational middle management, upper-middle management executives from the Industrial Park coming in to buy. It very diverse. We're open until p.m. because 6 p.m. onwards, th restaurants outside attract a lot o people. Before or after they ea they come around to do som shopping also."

For further information o Paseo de Santa Rosa and othe GDC projects, please call 420 8003 or (049) 5412845, ema marketing@greenfield.com.ph or log on to www.greenfield.com.ph.

RP tech firms out to conquer Asian markets

By Ronnel W. Domingo

"MAY YEHBA KA NA BA?"

It's a catchphrase that, while not yet a byword among local cell phone users, two trailblazing entrepreneurs want to hear uttered in other languages across the globe.

YehBA is a mobile Internet application that allows cell phone users to enjoy PC-style instant messaging with their text messaging gadgets.

Aside from that, YehBA allows texters to cancel messages that were sent to the wrong people or needed to be changed.

Wilfredo A. dela Cruz, president of D3 Systems Inc., explains that through www.yehba.com, cell phone users could schedule the sending of text messages or recall them after having been sent.

Dela Cruz, who has extensive experience in working for a telecommunications giant like PLDT as well as startups similar to D3 Systems, is half of the duo that founded the so-called "personal network integrator," which focuses on the user-level needs.

The other is Roger Delgado, who, according to D3 Systems, is responsible for laying out the initial technical foundation that made the country the texting capital of the world.

YehBA, which can be downloaded for free, was launched in 2005 and packaged as a tool that would let instant messaging regulars chat with their mobile phones as they do with Yahoo!, MSN or similar applications.

Delgado, the firm's chief technology officer, explains that YehBA stands for "your enterprise hub and business access.

"YehBA is perfect for long conversations," Delgado says. "And you can chat person-to-person, or join a text conference or a chatroom and talk with people all over the world."

"With YehBA, one can chat for an hour or so with loved ones abroad while sitting in a bus on the way to work," Delgado adds. "One can even join a conference chat with friends or business associates around the world while walking in a mall."

Dela Cruz says they are bringing YehBA to the global market through the CommuniAsia 2006, an exhibition for the information and communications technology industry that would be held in Singapore on June 20-23.

"We want to introduce a new mobile experience, new product concepts and additional features to traditional Short Messaging Service and fixed instant messaging," he says.

Dela Cruz says D3 Systems plans to showcase text conferencing features in the trade fair. With an activation cost of P2, mobile phone users can get in touch in real time with two or more parties, just like in chatrooms.

But beyond chat, users can also download special tokens through the network, which can then be used to buy items.

Mobile gaming is also a possibility on the YehBA network since D3 Systems is developing multi-user games to capitalize on the communities that would be formed.

The network currently supports Nokia 6680, 6681, 3230, 6670, 6260, 6630, 7610, 6620, 6600 as well as 7360, 6060, 6111, 6270, 6280, 8800, 6030, 6230i, 6102, 6101, 6020, 7260, 7270 and 3220.

Through these units—and locally, through any operator that offers GPRS—users can access popular public IM networks such GoogleTalk aside from the firm's own YehBA network.

Audible alerts are provided so that users are informed when another device or PC is trying to communicate with one's mobile device or when one's contacts become available to talk on YehBA.

Other features in the pipeline include "Push-to-Talk" or the ability to send voice messages over the Internet; storing applications such as ringtones, games and advertisements online; support for 3G or WiFi; and access to corporate e-mail, corporate application and databases.

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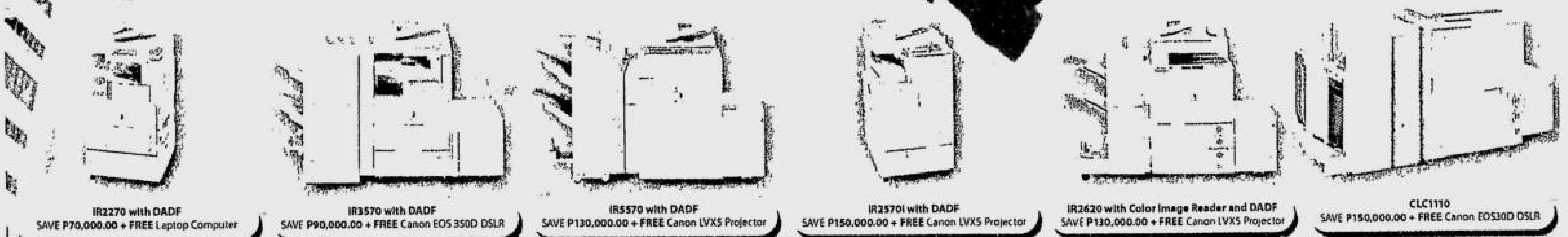

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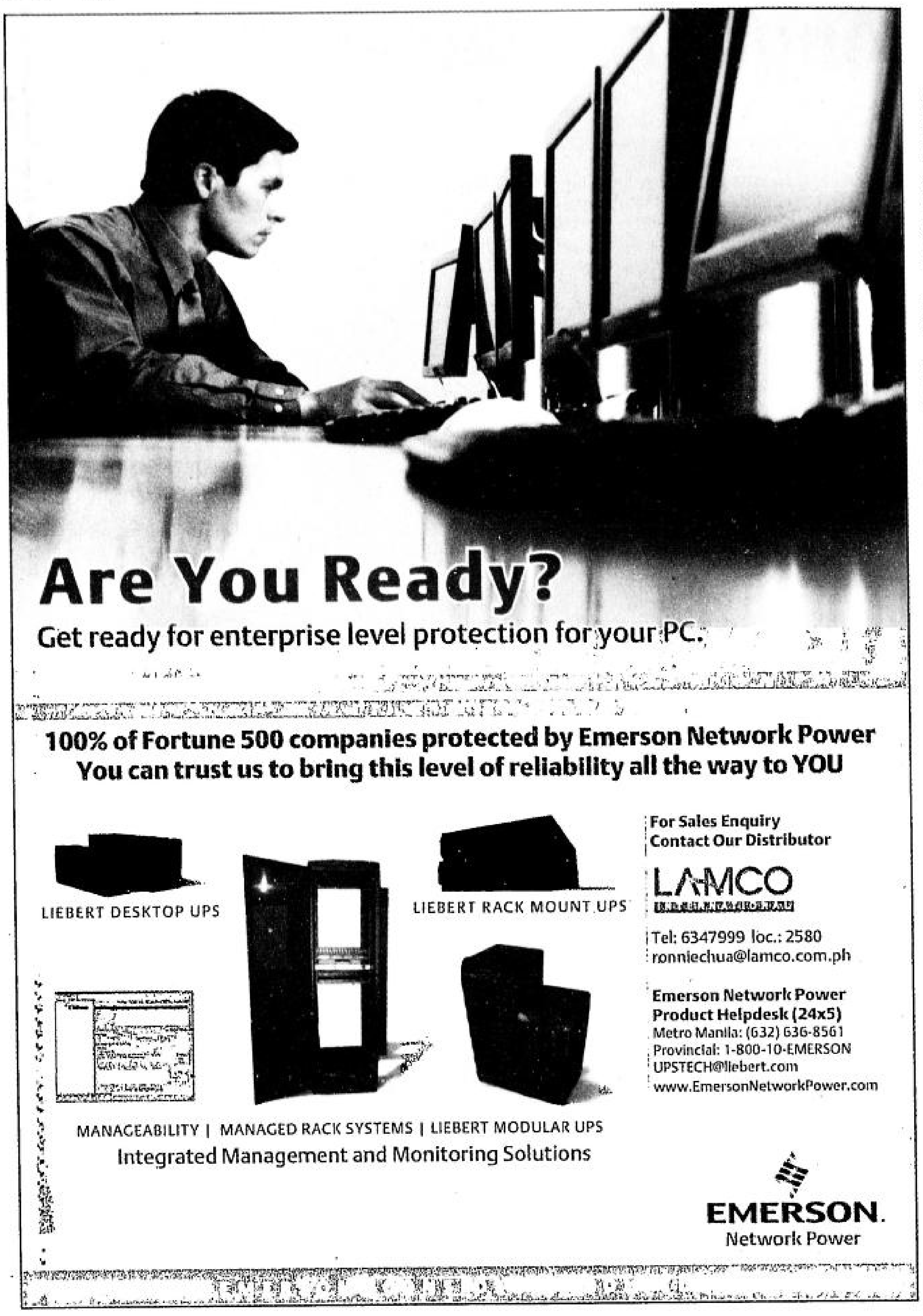
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The leader-coach

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

IN THE COMEDY, 'WHAT ABOUT BOB,' Bill Murray plays the character of Bob Wiley, a neurotic man with every conceivable fear and insecurity. Looking for help, Bob calls upon renowned psychiatrist, Dr. Leo Marvin. Dr. Marvin shares with Bob the secrets of his new book, Baby Steps, and works with Bob on a plan to cure him of his phobias.

Grateful for Dr. Marvin's insights, Bob leaves the office with a newfound optimism.

However, his panic attacks soon resume, and it becomes clear that the restoration of Bob's health demands more personalized attention than a program or an instruction manual can give to him.

Bob craves someone to walk with him step by step as he recovers. His anxiety and neediness drive him to track down the famous Dr. Marvin on a family vacation.

The ensuing antics between the needy patient and the self-important psychiatrist form the basis of this comedy.

While Bob is an exaggerated caricature compared to a normal worker, his hopes in Dr. Leo Marvin have merit in expressing the qualities followers wish to find in a leader-coach.

First, employees want a leader-coach who is willing to intentionally spend time with them. Next, they are searching for more than task knowledge—they are looking for a leader-coach to aid their development.

Finally, they want to be involved in an environment where they are challenged to grow.

In a recent article adapted from Sharon Ting and Peter Scisco's work, The CCL Handbook of Coaching: A Guide for the Leader Coach, the Center for Creative Leadership breaks down the basic characteristics of the leader-coach.

Leader-coaches are intentional

Leader-coaches strategically spend time discovering the strengths, weaknesses, goals, and values of those they lead. With an accurate picture of an employee's dreams and desires, the leader can coach the individual in areas which appeal to the employee's internal motivations.

Aside from the benefit of understanding an employee, a leader-coach bestows value and importance by intentionally giving attention to those on the team.

When employees feel anonymous they atrophy, but when they feel appreciated they tend to respond by giving their best efforts.

Leader-coaches focus on performance and development.

Whereas in the past leaders primarily looked toward productivity and results, today, leaders must place great importance on developing their personnel.

With a highly mobile workforce of growth-focused employees, leaders cannot afford to treat employees as cogs in a machine.

Workers want to expand their skills sets in addition to being part of a successful team, and if they're not being developed, they'll soon be departing.

An employee enjoying growth opportunities will be more likely to offer loyalty and commitment to organizational performance.

Leader-coaches take a systemic perspective

While leaders may take interest in individual employees, leader-coaches see their role as creating a culture of leadership growth.

Such leaders tailor tasks to present new and strategic challenges to those they manage.

Leader-coaches, in tandem with employees, may make a habit of scheduling extended learning experiences with the purpose of highlighting the growth within their team or department.

A leader-coach with enthusiasm for personal and team development initiates a contagious climate in which growth is sought after and prized.

To learn more about leader-coaches, visit the Center for Creative Leadership at www.ccl.org

For information on John Maxwell's in-house or public leadership or teamwork workshops, please email us at maxwell@inspire.ph or call 813-2732/03 and ask for Jesi or Bing. Text MAXWELL ON to 4632 (Smart) to get daily SMS leadership insights from John Maxwell. God bless!

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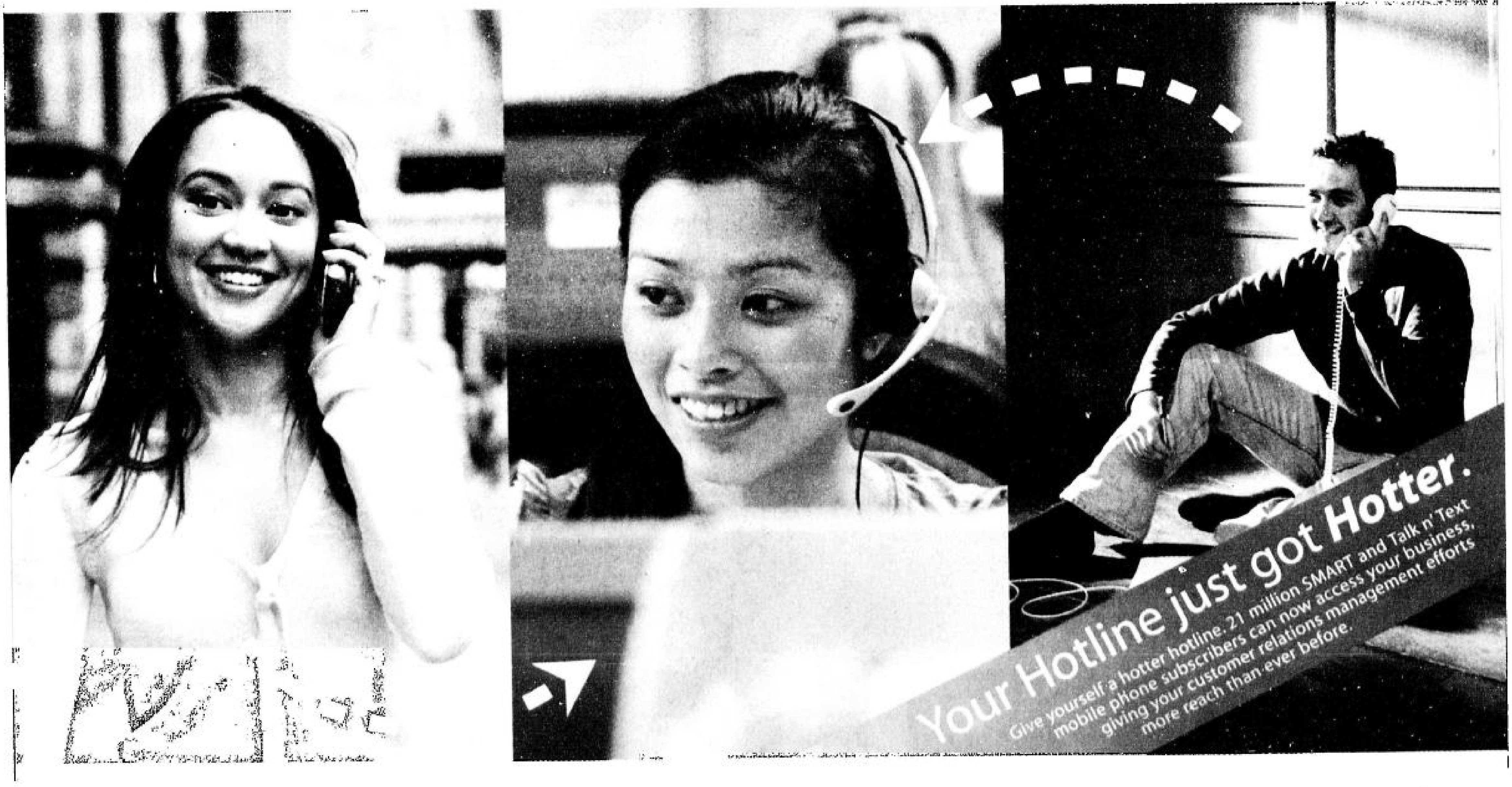
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FRENCH chamber concert wows Manila /C2

LifeStyle

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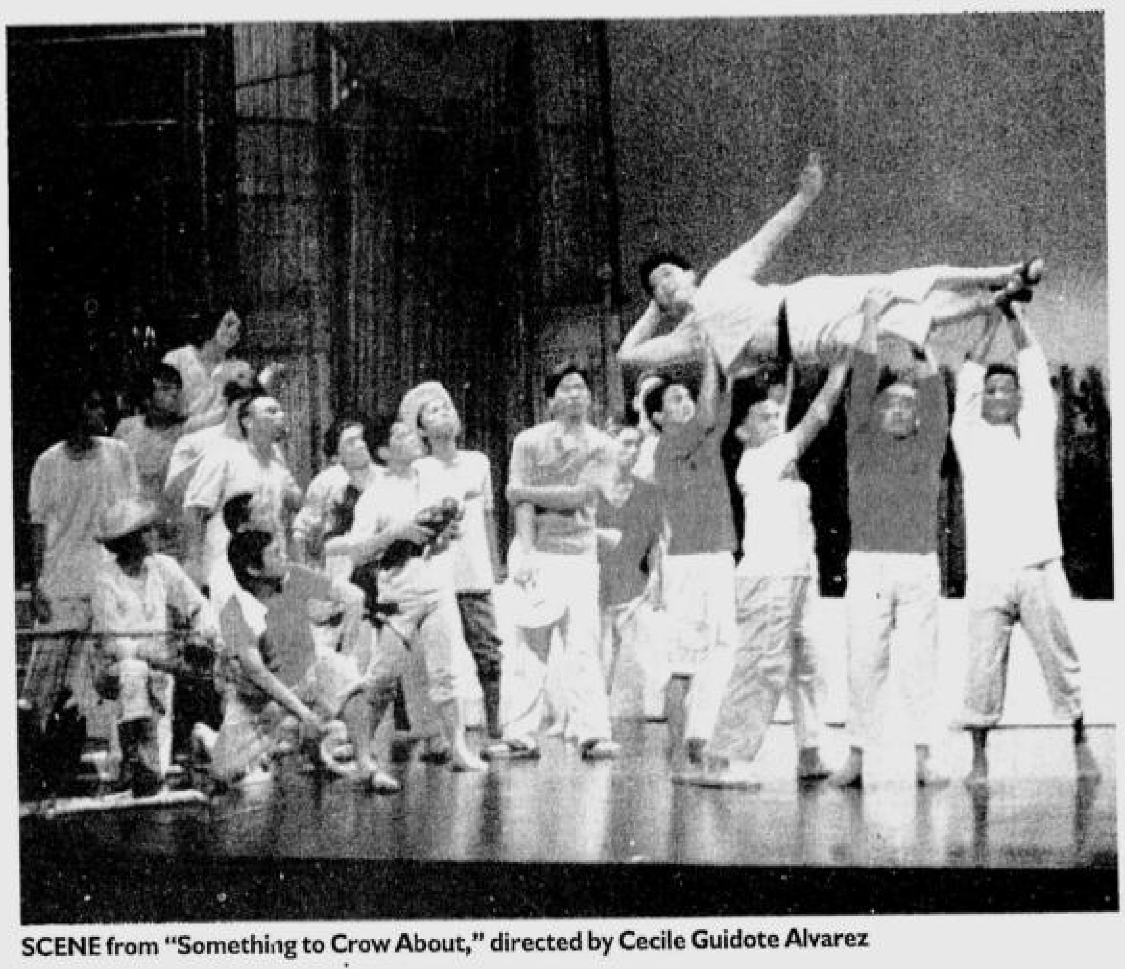
Cocks, corals and criminals

The Philippine entries to the recent Theater Olympics of the Nations ranged from the high-brow to the 'halo-halo'



SCENE from "Something to Crow About," directed by Cecile Guidote Alvarez

By Gibbs Cadiz

ONE OF THE VERY FIRST lines to open "Something to Crow About," the recent musicalized staging of Alejandro Roces' short stories on cockfighting, was, "Any material that showcases the greatness of the Filipino is good material."

The musical smorgasbord that would follow tried valiantly to live up to this declaration. As staged by Cecile Guidote Alvarez at the Emilio Aguinaldo College auditorium before an audience that included the Unesco director general himself, Koichiro Matsuura, and other cultural diplomats from all over the world, "Something to Crow About" crammed into its hour-and-a-half run a cockfight, a fiesta, a court hearing, a Santacruzan, an entire town band, some *arnis* combat, about 15 songs sung by more than 20 characters, a gaggle of dancers and acrobats, and even film footage.

The outcome of this gigantic theatrical *halo-halo* was a bright, sugary *perya* of a musical that was also busy and inconsequential. Because it had to make way for one song after the other (the synthetic music—billed as a *zarzuela* but more like two-bit Broadway—and unexpectedly funny lyrics were by Ferdinand Dimadura), the final text was a shallow, bare-bones copy of Roces' stories on cockfighting and their insights into the pecking order and gender arrangements of traditional Filipino society.

Unless Roces, a National Artist for Literature, would claim credit for the libretto, for instance, it's safe to assume that Dimadura

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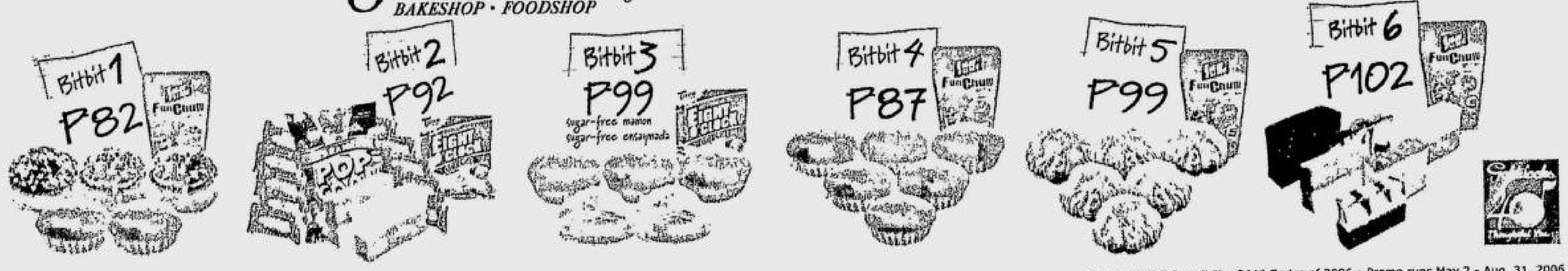

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DOMINIQUE Plancade on piano and Nemanja Radulovic on violin

Chamber concert h French Spring in M

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

A HIGHLIGHT OF THE CELEBRATION of French Spring in Manila 2006 was a chamber concert that fused the collaborative artistry of violinist Nemanja Radulovic and pianist Dominique Plancade in an all-sonata concert for violin and piano recently at the Philamlife Theater.

It was Radulovic's third time to perform in Manila, which only means Metro Manila music lovers simply adore him.

Not without reason. Apart from his youthful disposition, he cuts a debonair stance on stage, and performs with choreographic grace. More important is the élan, the sensitive elegance that wraps his entire rendition over the tyranny of big tones.

This is not to say that the duo carved a tiny sound. Instead their tones were lush and sensitive, just amply muscled for their program, fired by keen virtuosity.

The collaboration was great because both artists were of equal caliber. Prowess was not a singular but a collective attribute. The pianist matched the caliber of the violinist, and both played on equal footing, so to speak, making listening to chamber music truly pleasurable.

They etched an ensemble of a balanced give-and-take, and kept the stylistic tradition of intelligent playing.

Above all, the intimacy with which they bound their playing was impeccable.

This disposition was gleaned at once in the opening number of Mozart's Sonata in G Major, one of the many sonatas for violin and piano Mozart had written.

Virtuosity and clarity

Individual virtuosity did not becloud the clarity of the piece. The rendition kept the spontaneity of the piece, the flowing grace unfolding from the charming melodies, which is the essence of the work.

The interpretation avoided personal appropriation, but kept the classical tradition of unity of form and content. The musicians avoided forced-out tones, but carved out just the right intensity to come up with a firm, sparkling timbre.

The Mozart number was well received, and, for sure, it was a fitting homage to the composer whose 250th birth anniversary is celebrated the world over.

A direct contrast to Mozart was the somber Schumann Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, which the modest program insert listed in a Frenchy "*sonate in la*." Here, the duo etched their tone fully, underlining the work's rich and heavy texture. The give-and-take was again commendable, and the pianist sensitively carried the dialogue with the violinist.

Grieg's Sonata No. 3 in C Minor, Opus 45, again simply listed as "Sonate No. 3," brought out the quintessence of the duo's artistic fusion. The work is a masterpiece scored by Grieg, the "Chopin of

FRENCH cultural attaché Philippe Salord, Claude Castel and Marie Tanguy

FRENCH press attaché Carolle Lucas and columnist Rosalinda Orosa

ARA d'Aboville, Pamatec president and CEO Hubert d'Aboville and Pheck Cadilhon

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Cocks, corals and criminals

From page C1

wasn't breathing the same literary oxygen when he actually dubbed one of his songs "The Road Less Travelled By." Or when he inflicted these lines on the chorus:

"He's cocky 'bout his cock he wants me to handle

Like the Washington Monument—like it's Cleopatra's needle"

In a less inhibited period, Roces' double entendres ("He's a born cocker!," said a character) would sound witty and sophisticated, its winking subtext an invitation to gentle subversion. Here, the endless cock-y wordplay ("I've never seen a man so obsessed with his cock/He'll handle it, he'll fondle it around the clock") never achieved the liberating heights of true bawdiness, only a flat, trivial risibility.

Good thing the performers were far bigger than the material. To a man (or woman), the huge cast that included Lionel Guico, Ana Feleo, Joel Trinidad, Liesl Batucan (making a rare foray outside Repertory Philippines), Nazer Salcedo, Bong Embile, Cynthia Culig Guico, Dodo Crisol and Eugene de los Santos were at the top of their form. With national pride at stake, these actors elevated their middling songs and haphazard characters with stout-hearted singing and acting—never mind the production's over-miked sound mix.

Overcoming the odds with grit and humor—now, that was the greatness of the Filipino showcased.

'Shooting the Boys'

Lito Casaje's Dramatis Personae waded into the Theater Olympics of the Nations with "Shooting the Boys," a precisely drawn study of how poverty and crime (in this case, pedophilia) feed off each other in symbiotic ways.

Casaje's play, a finalist during the 1990 University of Exeter Playwriting Competition in England, painted in stark, unblinking pointillist strokes the fictionalized story of John Harvey (Declan Patrick), a Hollywood actor who blew into town as part of a Chuck Norris movie and chose to overstay in Pagsanjan, Laguna, where he maintained a stable of poor kids (often abetted by desperate parents) for his and his clients' sexual favors. He was eventually deported for his crimes.

As a document of a sordid social reality, "Shooting the Boys" was affecting and eye-opening.

"You are my wife. You are my son. You are my wife and son," said Harvey, addressing his kept boy, Caloy. The line, pregnant with terrifying implications, echoed Faye Dunaway's climactic revelation of incest in Roman Polanski's "Chinatown:" "She's my sister. She's my daughter. She's my sister AND daughter!"

However, as a window into its characters' compromised hearts, the play could stand more illumination. Harvey, an arbitrarily drawn character, violently swung from leering predator to self-pitying washout ("I'm going to hell," he moaned at one point to Caloy) in the blink of an eye. One would think a middle-aged, borderline-ugly guy who seduced children and their parents would also have an ounce of charm to leaven his naked monetary offerings with. This one didn't.

More tellingly, Casaje's naturalistic play was dulled by the fact that his actors couldn't act. Patrick's whiny arias about his sick, corrupt state was unpersuasive at best. The very young, obviously nervous actors playing the two boys were even more unconvincing.

Take this play out of its raw workshop environment and it could stand a chance of truly making a statement.

'Shadows of the Reef'

Bad acting also hobbled Anton Juan's new play, "Shadows of the Reef," a collaboration between the playwright-director's student workshoppers and the Albuaa Theatre Co. of Sudan, which provided the atmospheric live soundtrack to this tale of death, punishment and redemption in a desolate fishing village.

Anyone familiar with Juan's lifelong affinity for the Greek aesthetic in his dramatic works would know that, like Greek filmmaker Theo Angelopoulos ("Ulysses' Gaze"), he is concerned less often with fine-grained character sketches and neat narratives than with imposing, visually-oriented stagecraft that transcends particularized portraiture and, instead, aims for a world ruled—or messed up—by ritual, destiny, fate, a whimsical cosmos.

In this sense, weak acting by a cast lacking in psychological depth and discipline would be the least of his worries. And so it was with "Shadows of the Reef," a powerfully theatrical take on *muro-ami* fishing and the related exploitation of children by its practitioners.

A boy, one of hundreds from destitute islands employed by Japanese ships to dive and drive out schools of fish from coral reefs, is trapped in the vast net plunging downward. His mother, overcome with grief, spirals into self-destructive behavior, whoring herself to docking fishermen and begging the horrified parish priest to crucify her during Holy Week.

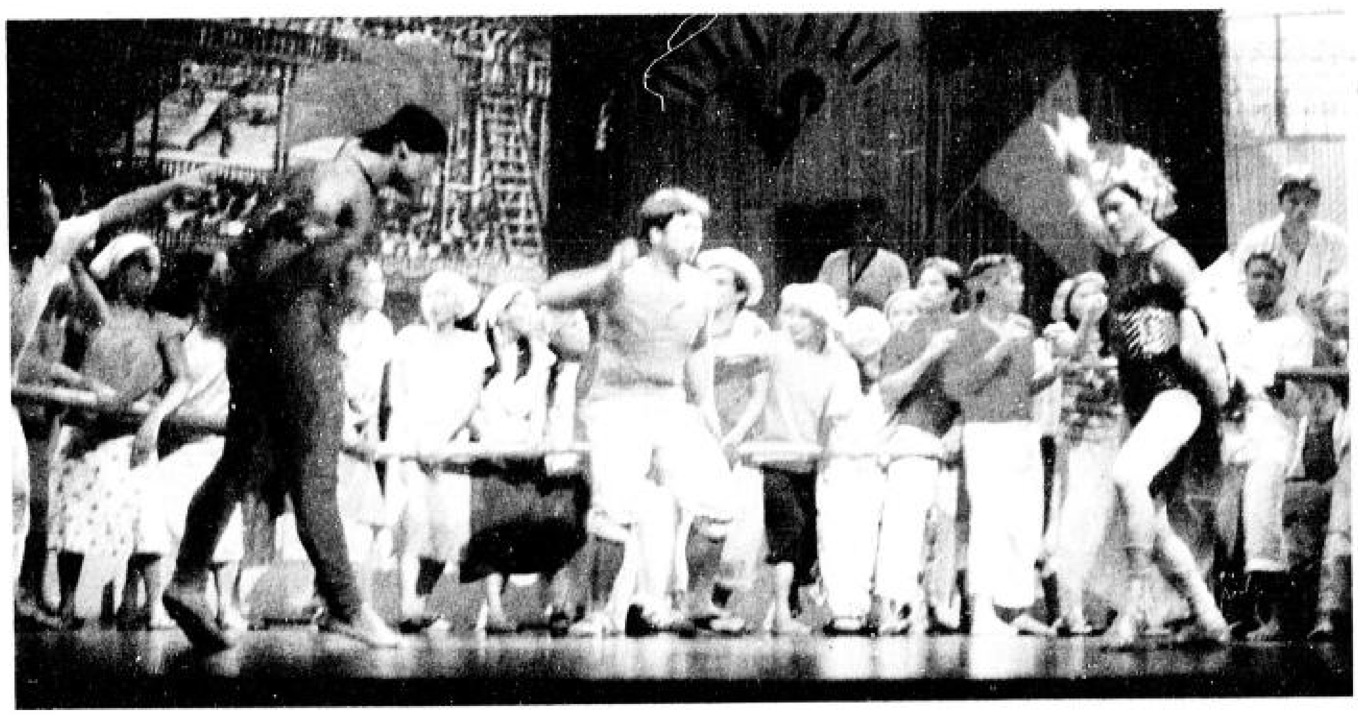
To illustrate the boy's death, Juan staged a bravura sequence employing eerie African chants, foghorn blasts and shadowy lighting. The ensemble of young actors, rolling slow-mo on the floor like floating fetuses, slowly coalesced to become writhing coral reefs. As the actor playing the boy swam among them, a net slowly descended on the tableau. The boy kicked and gasped, kicked and gasped, until darkness swallowed the image.

This tragedy, repeating itself soon enough, would force the village to come to terms with the wages of the mercantile evil haunting their town.

Juan, ever the provocateur, wasn't about to stop there, however. In the finale, the ensemble, lighted like ghosts on the bare black stage of Tanghalang Huseng Batute, raised the net above their heads. Then, without warning, they climbed up the bleachers, right in-between members of the startled audience.

One final foghorn blast later, the net dropped on the heads of the spectators. Touché.

E-mail the author at gcadiz@inquirer.com.ph



THE COCKFIGHT scene in "Something to Crow About," using National Artist for Dance Leonor Orosa Goquingco's choreography

DRAMATIS Personae's Lito Casaje directing Declan Patrick in "Shooting the Boys"

SCENE from Anton Juan's "Shadows of the Reef"

Enrico Labayen show

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY, HYBRID ART collaborative performance between the Philippines and Australia titled "Peregrinations... Against Reduction" will be staged June 9, 8 p.m., and June 10-11, 3 p.m., at the CCP Huseng Batute as part of the ongoing International Theater Festival. It dwells on the real-life battle of HIV-AIDS victims. Guest performers are renowned international choreographer Enrico Labayen and media arts specialist Vienna Parreno. Call 8321125 local 1606-1607.

LABAYEN in action

Chorus Philippines at Paco Park Present

CHORUS PHILIPPINES renders well-loved folk songs and patriotic music in a special concert, "Philippine Portraits," at Paco Park Presents on June 9, 6 p.m.

The show, which marks the country's 108th Independence Day, features National Artist Lucrecia Kasilag's "Purihin si Yahweh," new choral arrangements of well-loved folk tunes, and stirring patriotic

Chorus Philippi composed of church ters, nurses, young sionals and music It is currently record first CD album of folk and conte songs arranged by its master, Joy T. Nilo.

Paco Park is Marcelino and Pad Streets, Paco, Man mission is free.

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ighlights anila

PRESS attaché Carolle Lucas, Alliance Française de Manille director Olivier Dintinger, and First Secretary Alain Fortin

the North."

From start to finish the rendition was a marvel, dishing out the rich lyricism of the piece that at times pulsated with folksy ambiance. In a singing manner, the duo played the piece with solid dispatch that awed the audience, which broke out into hearty applause so that the duo had to oblige for some encores.

The duo was remarkable for its tight rapport. Though they demonstrated opposing stance—the pianist sat cool and composed while the violinist graced his playing with choreographic movements that included the unmusical stamping of the foot that burst as the temper of the piece soared up—their sound was fresh and homogenously well-blended.

The violinist's movements were not for show, but sincere occasional expressive gestures that did not distract at all.

The audience was quite appreciative. Of course, its number was dismal. It was so disappointing to see only a handful watching a world-class performance. No matter, the duo is for keeps.

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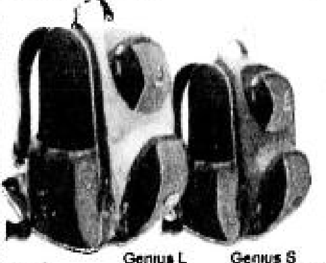

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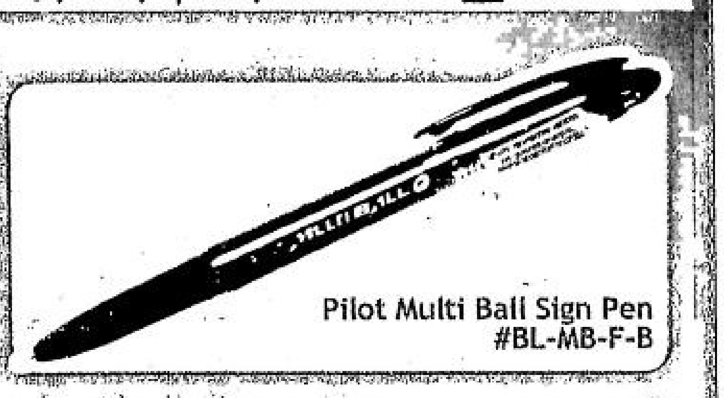

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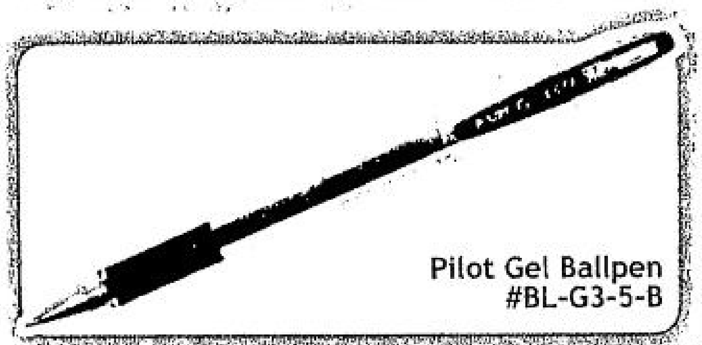

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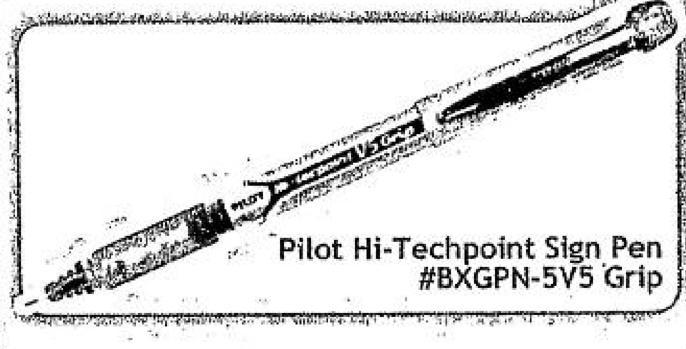

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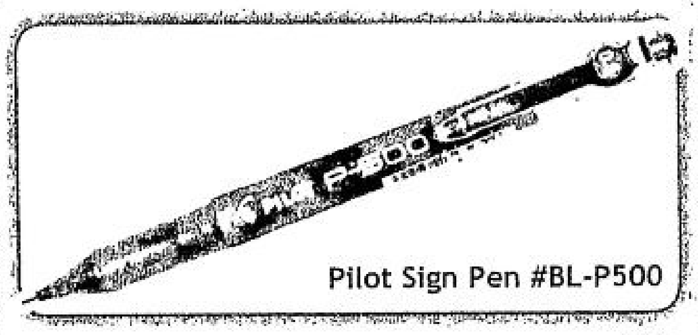

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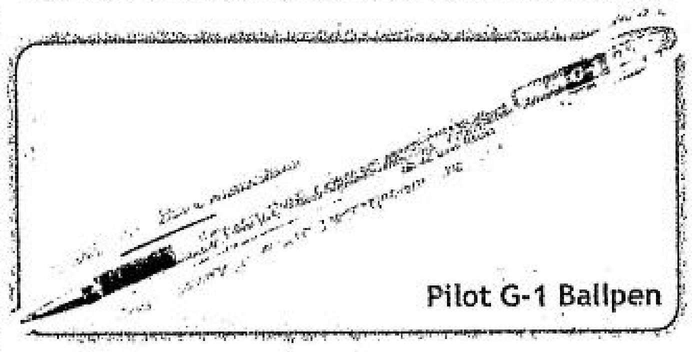

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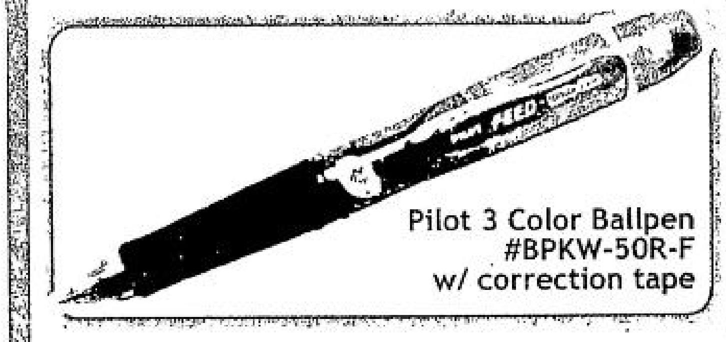

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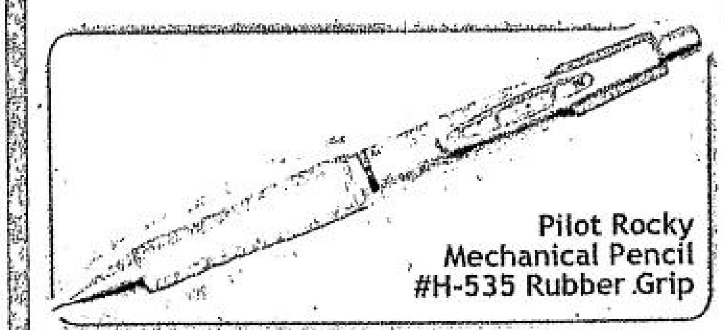

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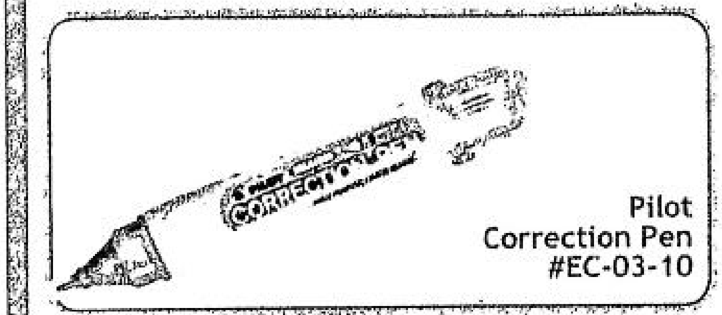

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MARCEL Carné's "Les Enfants du Paradis" (Children of Paradise), 1945

ABDELLATIF Kechiche's "L'esquive" (Games of Love and Chance), 2003

Major French filmmaker to present latest work at French Spring in Manila

By Constantino C. Tejero

"IN FRANCE, CINEMA HAS NEVER BEEN simply a mode of entertainment but rather a source of engagement... The passions elicited by the cinema in France are those sparked by painting, music, literature, theater and governance, and the inquiring writers, energized by the ideas the arts ignite, write about film with the same verve they write about other lively disciplines."

Thus Laurence Kardish rightly points out in his introduction to "Positif 50 Years: Selections from the French Film Journal."

Taking their cinema seriously, the French have been running the oldest annual foreign film festival in this country. Grateful Filipino moviegoers have so acquired a taste for French films that the filmfest has also become one of the most popular in Manila.

It is now a regular feature of French Spring in Manila, the annual cultural event put up by the Embassy of France, the Alliance Française de Manille and the Association Française d'Action Artistique.

The 11th French Film Festival runs June 8-18 in the Cineplex of Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Edsa cor. Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City. As in previous years, it presents contemporary classics and recent award-winners as well as provides venue for advance screening of new works to be released in the country.

On opening night, filmmaker Pierre Schoendoerffer himself will come to present his latest work fresh from the Cannes filmfest, "Là-Haut," with screening at 8 p.m.

Relatively unknown to Filipino cinéphiles, Schoendoerffer belongs to that batch of French filmmakers who turned up just after the New Wave in the early 1960s—the batch of Claude Lelouch, Claude Sautet, Constantin Costa-Gavras and Robert Bresson. (In Italy, their counterparts would be the batch of Bernardo Bertolucci, Ermanno Olmi and Pier Paolo Passolini, who came after the Neorealists.)

These filmmakers straddle the ideology and aesthetics of the Nouvelle Vague and mainstream cinema, producing art films that take on the look of action movies, love stories, thrillers, quasi-documentaries.

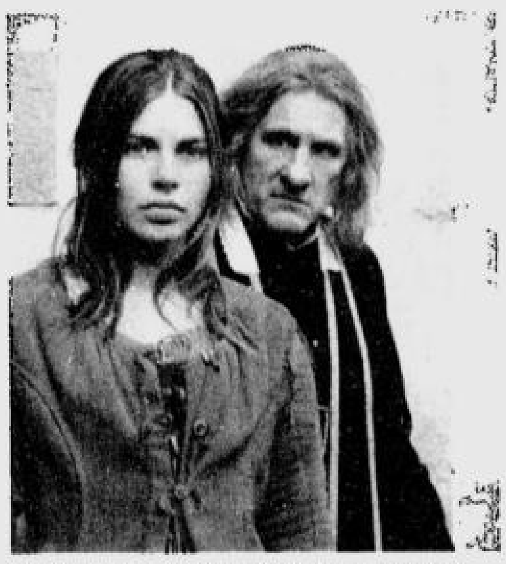
Known for exploring personal visions within the action genre, Schoendoerffer has worked on three documentaries with Raoul Coutard, that photojournalist turned-cinematographer who has been very influential in forming the aesthetics of New Wavers from François Truffaut to Jean-Luc Godard.

Schoendoerffer has made a niche for himself in world cinema with "La 317ème Section," "Dien Bien Phu," "Le Crabe-Tambour" and "L'Honneur d'un Capitaine." The first two vividly recreate his war experience in Vietnam, while the last two take colonial France as subject.

On June 10, the director will attend a symposium at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, where one of his classics will be screened.

Alliance Française is also organizing a short-film workshop for young filmmakers, in collaboration with the Short Film Festival of Clermont Ferrand.

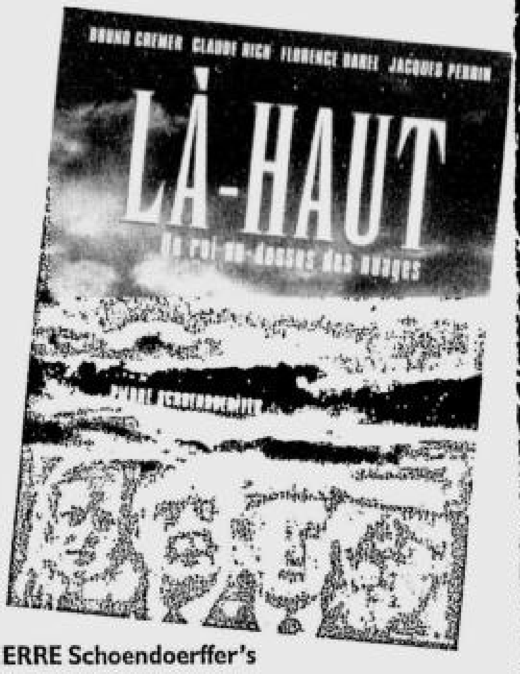
The French Film Festival will be extended to Cebu on June 23-25 at the Ayala Cinemas.



JEAN Beaudin's "Nouvelle France" (New France), 2004

MAGGIE Cheung in Olivier Assayas' "Clean," 2004

HENRI-GEORGES Clouzot's "Le Corbeau" (The Raven), 1943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Un roi au-dessus des nuages
PIERRE SCHOENDOERFFER

PIERRE Schoendoerffer's "Là-Haut," 2003

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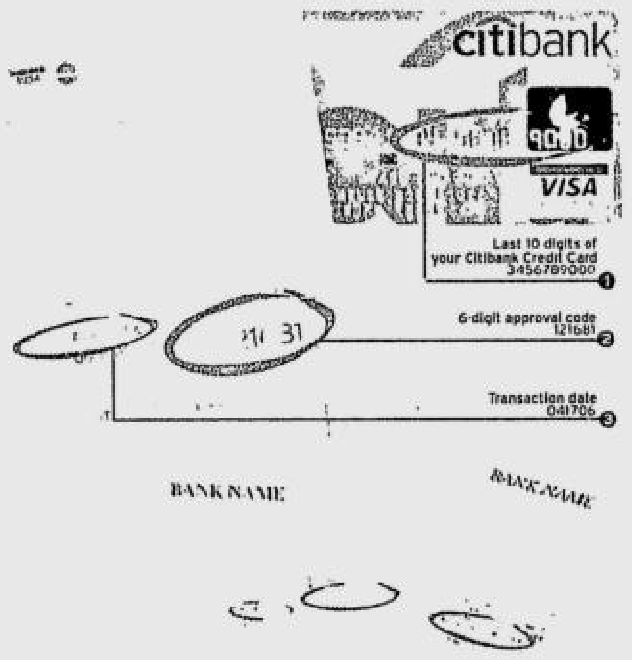
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From architectural landmark to parking lot

Pride of Place

Augusto F. Villalon

BY THIS TIME THE wrecker's ball will be pretty close to having turned the venerable Avenue Theater into rubble.

One of central Manila's unappreciated architectural heritage landmarks, the structure on Avenida Rizal, which once was among the city's grandest avenues, has fallen on hard times.

Reports say the Avenue Theater property will be converted into a parking lot.

National Artist for Architecture Juan Nakpil designed the building in the 1930s, renovating it in the 1950s. Nakpil, son of composer and Katipunero Julio Nakpil and Gregoria de Jesus, widow of the Katipunan Supremo Andres Bonifacio, studied architecture at University of Kansas, followed by courses at Fontainebleu School of Arts in France, and finally at Harvard Graduate School for Architecture.

Nakpil is acknowledged as among the pioneers and early innovators in Philippine architecture. Among his surviving works today are the SSS Building, Quezon Institute and the University of the Philippines Administration and Library buildings in Quezon City.

A prolific architect, he designed most of the mansions that gave Vito Cruz Street its air of elegance, all demolished except for the surviving residence of the descendants of Gen. Vicente Lim.

Avenue Theater was designed in the Art Deco style that swept through the world during the '30s. This was the time when the invention of machines brought industrialization and prosperity to many world economies including the Philippines, establishing an epoch of growth and stability called Peace Time by an older generation that today has practically died out.

Conservationists are making noises about "Saving the Avenue Theater," but outside of that circle, few are aware that it should be saved, much less why.

Hardly anyone knows of the Avenue's significance as an example of outstanding 1930s architecture, that the theater has played a strong role in many generations of Manila's moviegoing life, or that if the structure had been reused for another commercial purpose (maybe for a combination of offices, boutiques, shops, or even as a building containing rehearsal or painting studios for artists), it could have been the innovative out-of-the-box thinking to spark much-needed heritage revitalization on today's Avenida Rizal.

No legal protection

Avenue's pedigree or that of other notable heritage buildings' has not been officially established. Therefore government authorities, general public and owners of heritage buildings find difficulty in understanding why such buildings must not be demolished and why their existence contributes to the quality of contemporary Philippine life.

Structures with historical associations, such as heroes' birthplaces and homes, battlefields and memorial grounds, are protected against demolition by national legislation and are regulated by the National Historical institute. It makes sense to conserve places associated with history, but what about other types of heritage places?

At present, nothing on paper lawfully protects heritage buildings and neighborhoods of artistic, architectural or social significance, such as the Avenue Theater or the heritage neighborhoods in towns like Carcar, Cebu.

These places may not be historical or monumental, but they are examples of Philippine architectural excellence. They are the envelopes where generations of Filipinos have lived out their private histories. Many of these are everyday places whose worth goes unappreciated.

Since there exists no legal basis in the Philippines explicitly setting the rationale and method for keeping such structures alive, "conservationists can only grit their teeth and clench their fists at the ongoing demolition of the once-famous Avenue Theater, a work of National Artist Juan Nakpil," wrote reporter Jerome Aning in a recent INQUIRER story.

Conservationists have been clenching their fists a lot in the past years. Hotly contested issues—Jai Alai, Mehan Garden, Arroceros Forest Park—pushed conservationists and government authorities into opposing corners that left no space for dialogue.

Be heritage-constructive

It is now time to be constructive about heritage, for establishing dialogue, for arriving at innovative solutions to show that heritage and progress go hand in hand.

The shift is happening. The Heritage Schoolhouse Program of the Department of Education restores decayed or abandoned heritage schoolhouses to provide much-needed additional classrooms.

Realizing that heritage structures are underutilized resources, the mayors of Silay and Escalante in Negros Occidental commissioned conservation planners to plan reuse schemes for old buildings and heritage plazas in their cities.

More than a few public and private owners of heritage buildings are now realizing that old buildings are not white elephants, that they remain to be productive for today's lifestyle requirements, that they do not need to be fitted out as museums but can serve the community by being schoolhouses, offices or shops.

The question is no longer whether heritage buildings stand in the way of progress and development. The question has become "What can be done with a heritage building?"

With the reality of poor awareness of heritage value, and considering the absence of legislation that clearly and sensitively protects groups of structures within designated heritage districts, our unprotected heritage structures vanish one by one with very little that can be done to protect them.

Since no consolidated list of declared Philippine structures and sites is available on the Internet and no attempt to make one available exists, Ivan Henares who sits on the Board of the Heritage Conservation Society, is starting such a list. Visit http://ivanhenares.blogspot.com/2005/04/index-of-declared-structures-and-sites.html, click on "Post a Comment" at the bottom of the page, add buildings and places that you think should be preserved, or make corrections on what is existing on the list. This might be the start of a basis for defining what are heritage structures and places in the Philippines.

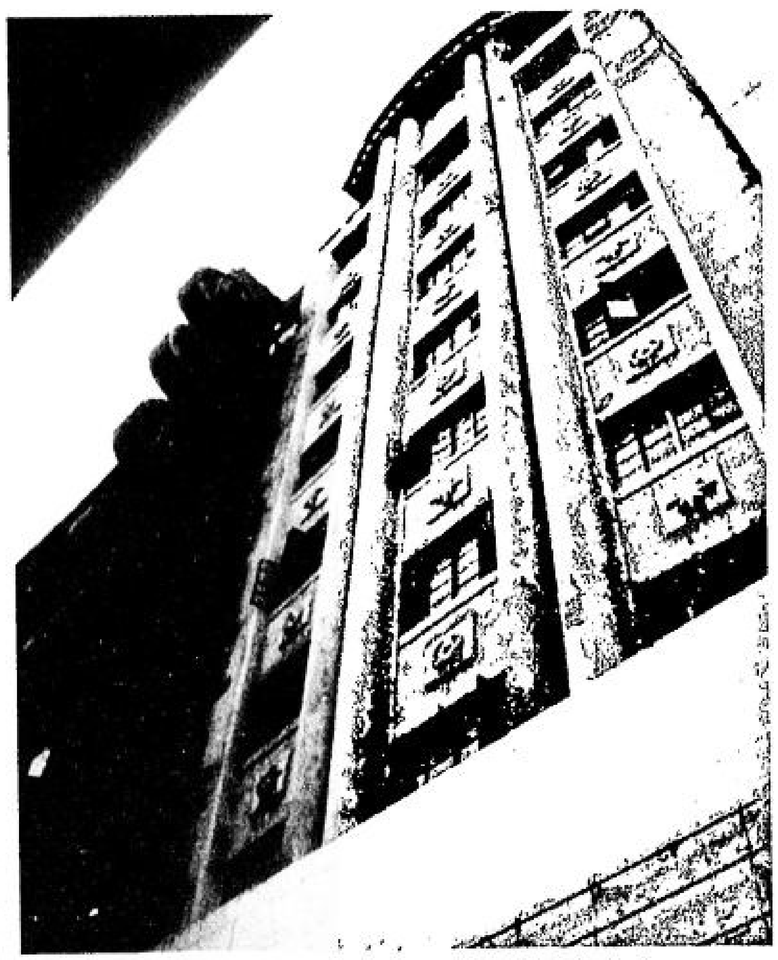
Heritage watch

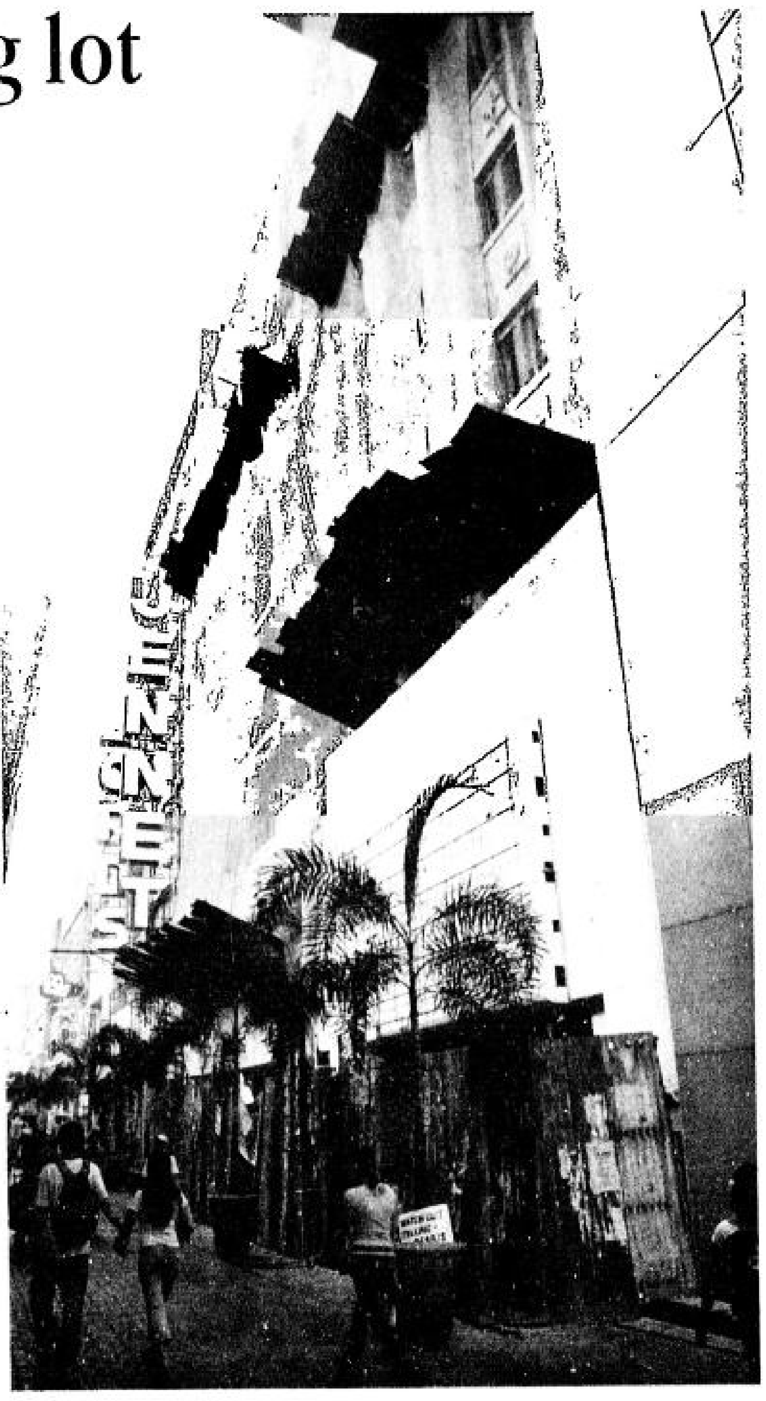
A picture taken two weeks ago in Bagac, Bataan, shows total disrespect that may be caused by the ignorance of this generation for our heritage, historical markers and their significance. The marker keeps the memory alive of those who bravely endured hardship or even death during World War II because they believed in Philippine freedom.

The Filipino-American Memorial Endowment Inc. (FAME) works hard to preserve the tangible reminders of World War II. It generates funds to maintain the physical appearance of World War II monuments as an avenue for developing a better understanding among the youths who have had no experience or knowledge that a shared Filipino-American heritage exists.

FAME works hard to get support for these memorials, spending additional hard-earned funds yearly for repainting and refurbishment after monuments are defaced with rude graffiti, campaign posters, and having messages of dedication scratched off by vandals.

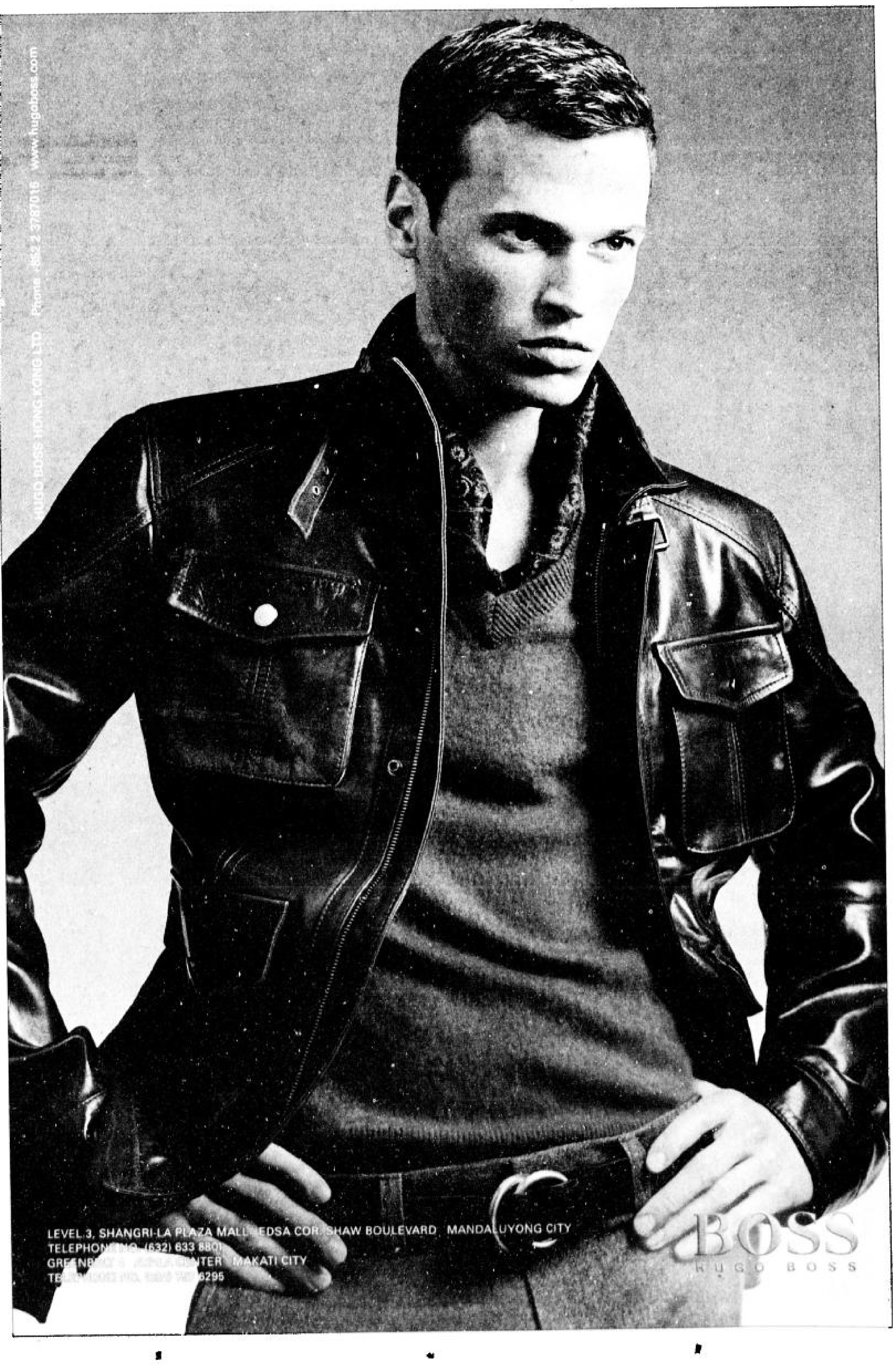
If you wish to help to increase awareness of the significance of the markers and to prevent them from being vandalized, contact the FAME Secretariat at the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines at 8187911, fax 8113981, e-mail leslie@amchamphilippines.com





BEFORE it has been boarded up for demolition (right), the Avenue Theater's Art Deco elegance shines through despite the wear and tear.

E-mail the author at pride.place@gmail.com



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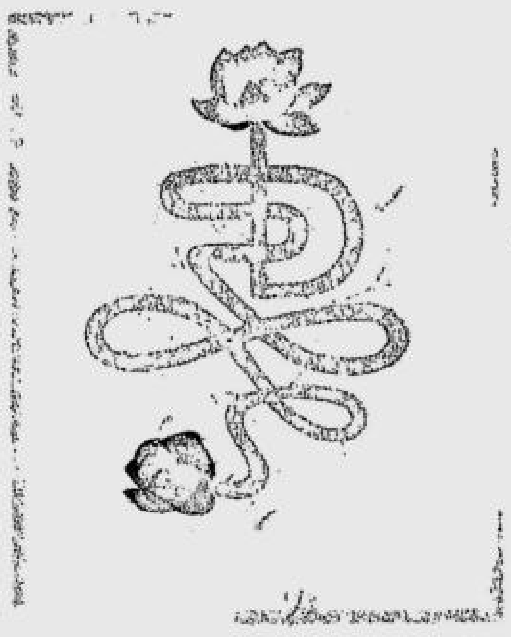

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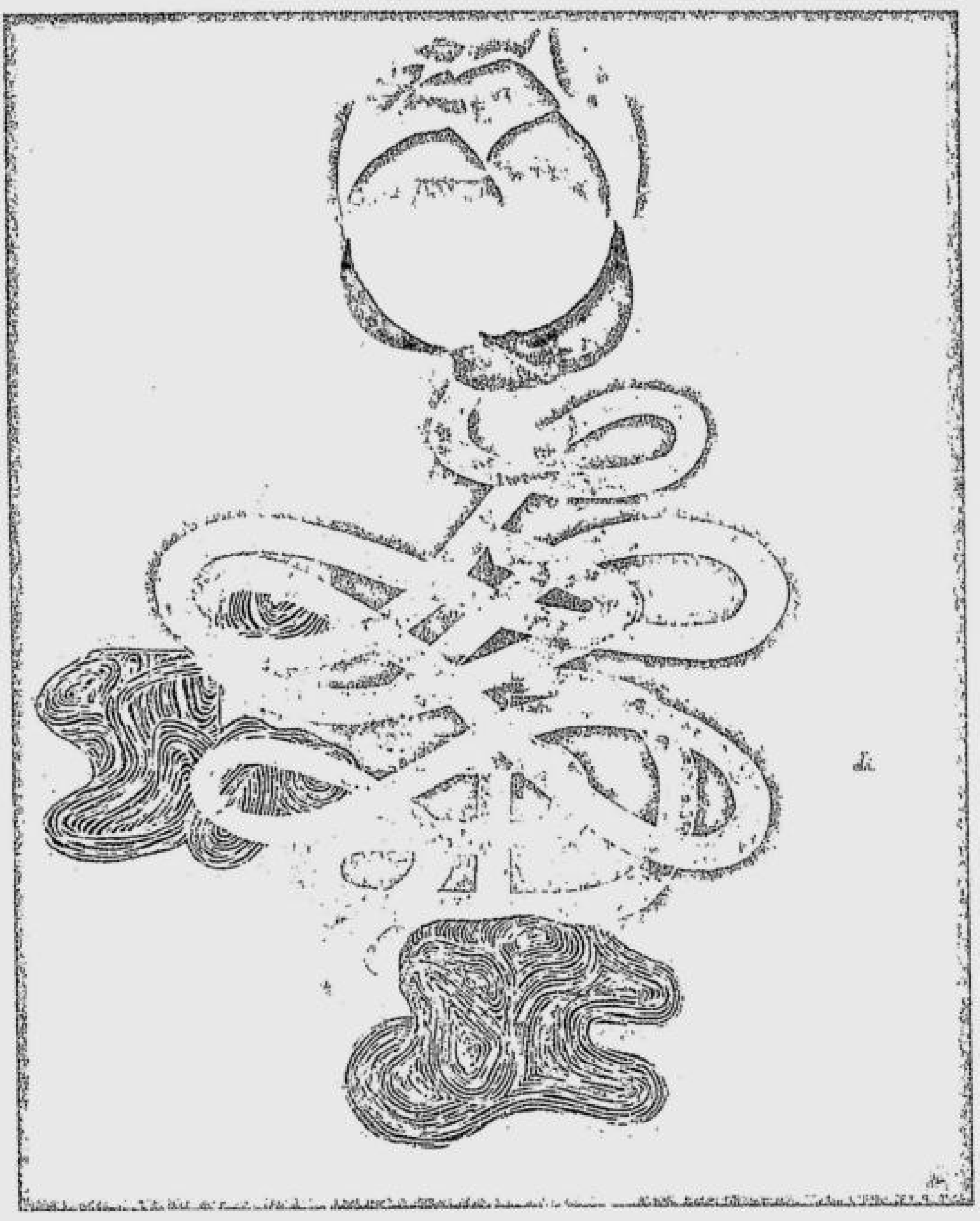
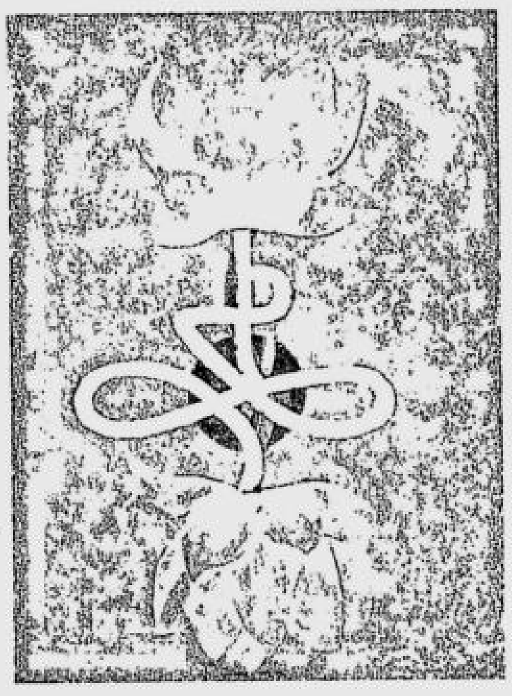
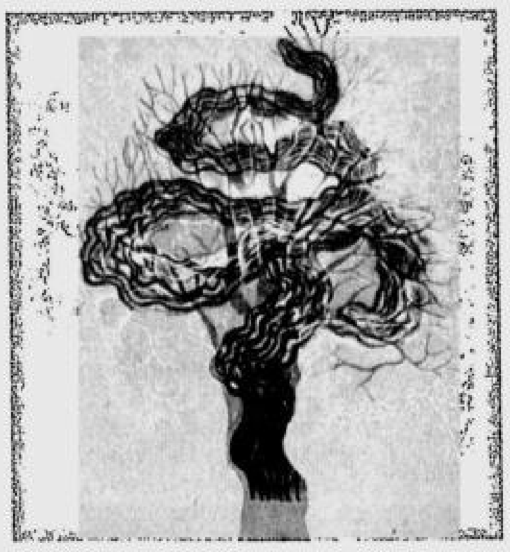




"LOTUS Cloud Pond" (above); "DOUBLE Pink Lotus" (left)



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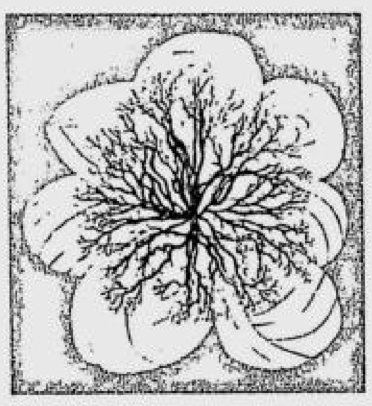


"CLOUDTREE"

A fine specimen of the postmodern

By Constantino C. Tejero

POSTMODERNISM HAS BEEN AROUND for four decades already. Emerging in the 1960s and developing in the academe in the '70s, it is now being brandished about even in the world of show business and fashion.

And yet many of those who indiscriminately use the word don't really get it, and still more are completely in the dark. So, what makes a postmodernist?

This artistic movement is described as ";a reaction to or rejection of the dogma, principles or practices of established modernism," characterized by the use of "elements from historical vernacular styles and often playful illusion, decoration and complexity."

Academic disquisition aside, it is, quite simply, a reworking of traditional forms and ancient methods.

While in its later development modernism looks more and more austere, minimalist, even functional, the postmodern appears complicated, recondite, even fantastical. One doesn't have to put meaning to that, it's just a reaction.

A fine illustration is "LotusCloudTreeMist," an exhibit of monoprints and pieces in oil on canvas by Emily SyCip Cheng, presented by Galleria Duemila until June 8, in MuseumSpace at the Glass Wing;, 2/F, Ayala Museum, Makati Ave. cor. De la Rosa St., Makati City.

In its winking playfulness and self-conscious employment of fantasy, complex forms and allusions to historic styles, Cheng's art certainly satisfies the standard definition of the postmodern.

Reinvented images

Priya Malhotra, in a review in Asian Art News, says of this Chinese American artist: "Her work is eclectic and multilayered, replete with a variety of images ranging from the decorative to the mystical inspired by centuries of art from across the world."

One glance and the viewer recognizes the teasing quality of these pieces. The playfulness is such that the artist has made her paintings to look like prints and the prints appear like, well, paintings.

Most of these monoprints are various depictions of the sacred lotus, many of them similar in composition and varying only in hues, tonalities and textures.

Quite painterly are "Lotus Cloud Pond" and "Double Pink Lotus," the first being the loveliest with its pink blossom, avocado-green sepals, chartreuse stalk and turquoise pond on a field of burnt orange.

Here, traditional Oriental motifs appear not only in the Indian lotus but also in its stalk that forms the Chinese knot of longevity, in the pond that's familiar in Japanese scroll painting, in the Oriental sun.

Malhotra analyzes Cheng's technique thus: "She starts by stripping images of their symbolic content and retaining just the form. Then she imaginatively reincarnates them in such a way that they preserve their individuality yet weave into each other. The outcome is highly refined compositions of reinvented images that have an independent, complete identity and are able to communicate in a totally fresh manner. In that sense, she is a true postmodernist."

Complex composition

Some of the paintings in the exhibit look more like drawing illustrations and photo prints than painting proper. A few are composed of no more than bold black outlines and monochromatic washes.

"CloudTree" is a black-and-white composite image of flower, star, cumulus cloud, tree crown, branches, roots and veins on a turquoise background. The compounding of various elements produces the surreal effect of X-ray photography.

"TreeMist" shows a multilinear outline of mist curling to form a gnarled black tree superimposed on a purple tree with white twigs against a mauve sky. The complex layering and the incandescence produced is remarkable.

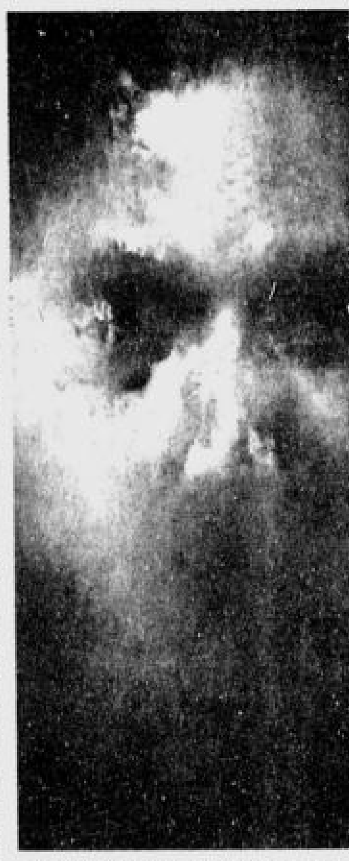
Whether the artist intended to express some profundity or mystical notion in these pieces, we don't know. This is fine decorative art, and if you put meaning beyond that, it's okay.

The most exquisite accolade accorded these pieces Roberta Smith says in New York Times: "The paintings' translucent colors and delicate linear fragments seem to levitate before the viewer's eyes, as if bits of Chinese ceramics or embroidery were drifting through layers of folded, colored air."

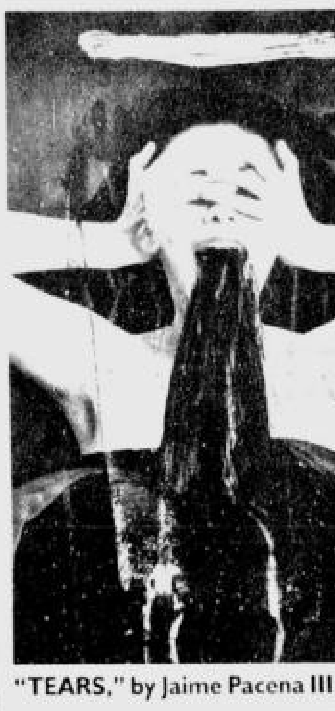
Cheng took up Fine Arts, major in Painting, at the Rhode Island School of Design. She took further studies at the New York Studio School of Painting, Drawing and Sculpture.

She received the National Endowment for the Arts and New York Foundation for the Arts fellowships.

"JELO Submarine" poster



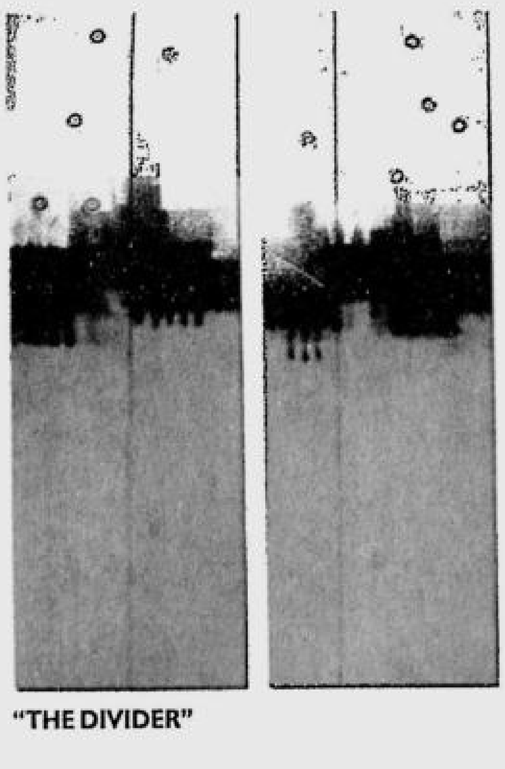
"MEEK," by Buen Calubayan



"TEARS," by Jaime Pacena III

Art of divide and multiply

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor



"THE DIVIDER"

IT COMES LIKE AN EAGERLY ANTICIPATED shower: conjuring images that refresh the senses and resuscitate the spirit, and this after a long, debilitating summer spell.

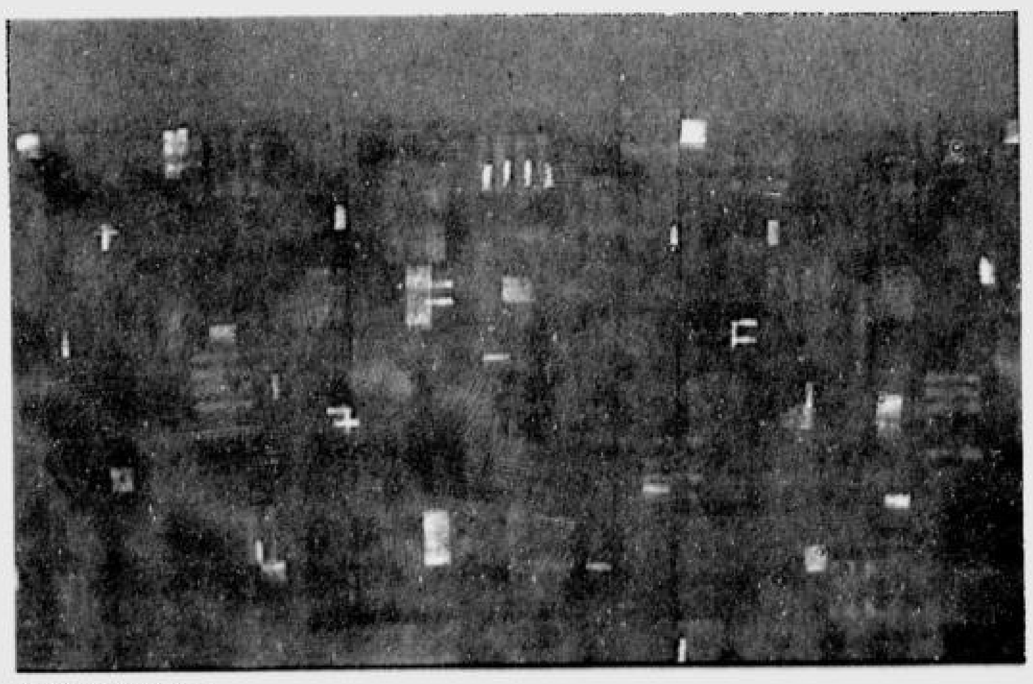
This sums up the first solo show of emerging abstract artist Fitz Herrera, "Divisions," in Renaissance Gallery, Art Walk, SM Megamall (until June 12).

A Fine Arts graduate of the University of the East in 2000, Herrera majored in Advertising, a course that helped him land a job as web designer for an RTW apparel outfit and later as graphic artist for a well-known recording company.

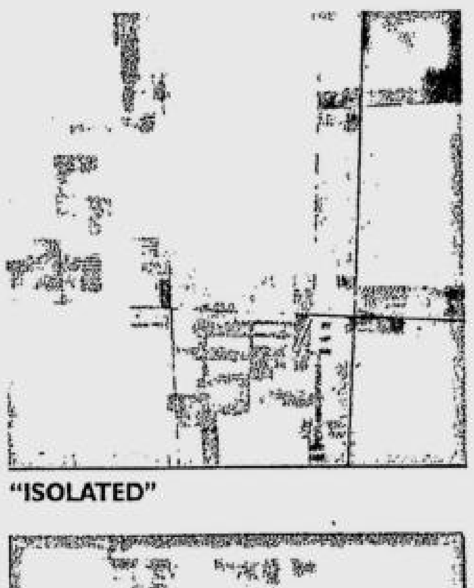
Herrera joined art contests without letup even as he kept a 9-5 job. He placed third in the 2004 Metrobank Art Competition, and a finalist in both the Art Association of the Philippines Annual and the Phillip Morris Art Competitions.

For a year now, Herrera has become a regular artist of Renaissance Gallery, whose owner, Noli Romero, has encouraged new artists.

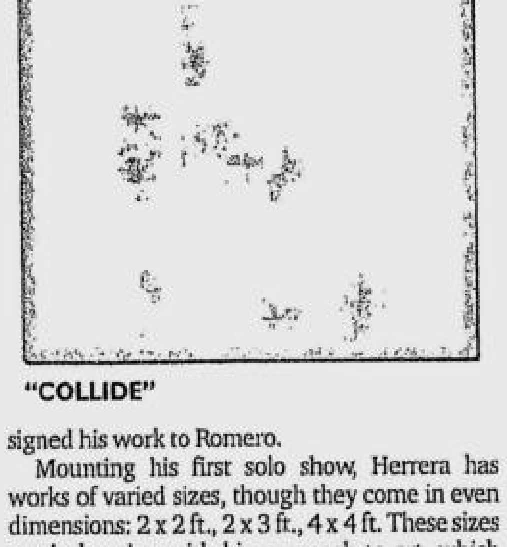
Today Herrera has, on record, become the gallery's bestseller, which is doubly amazing since it has only been a year since he first consigned his work to Romero.



"BATTLE City" 2



"ISOLATED"

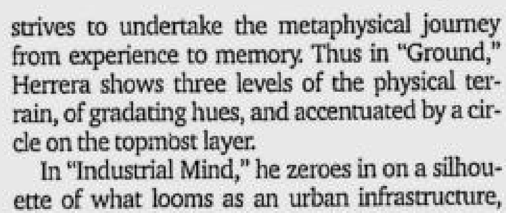


"COLLIDE"

Mounting his first solo show, Herrera has works of varied sizes, though they come in even dimensions: 2 x 2 ft., 2 x 3 ft., 4 x 4 ft. These sizes are in keeping with his approach to art, which takes off from his seminal image of the square, one that virtually keeps multiplying through fission and fragmentation. Of course, this geometrically balanced figure is constantly engaged in a lively dialogue with other squares, rectangles, tiny circles and that elemental line, drawn from a Staedler pencil, serving as his main precursor.

Landscape

The focus of Herrera's art is the landscape, both exterior and interior, as the subconscious strives to undertake the metaphysical journey from experience to memory. Thus in "Ground," Herrera shows three levels of the physical terrain, of gradating hues, and accentuated by a circle on the topmost layer.



"SPACES"

In "Industrial Mind," he zeroes in on a silhouette of what looms as an urban infrastructure, areal and architectural forms, highlighted by a row of horizontal and vertical lines.

Herrera, on occasion, also indulges in pure whimsy, the accidental or the purely unexpected, like any abstractionist who has earned his keep.

In "Battle City" 2, the square panels seem concealed from view, with the entire white blotches becoming more prominent than the red squares, in an amusing horizontal-vertical collision course.

Herrera's appeal as painter lies in his rare ability to create endless variations of the vestigial image. This is made manifest in "Spaces," a grouping of 16 panels (all 12" x 12"), with colors so soothing, plum-orange, apple-green, yellow-ochre—that the overall image is a paean to universal harmony.

Add to this the highly restrained use of textural lines that have emerged from the use of a comb, their teeth punctured one after another.

The soft-spoken artist from Caloocan, who lives by the tracks of the Philippine National Railways, has stamped his signature style—squares and rectangles divided and linked by linear conduits and cell-like circles. His philosophy thrives on the simplest equation. It's called divide and multiply.

In this age of widespread chaos and visual stratification, Herrera's art seems destined for loftier heights.

E-mail author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com

Banz Ban

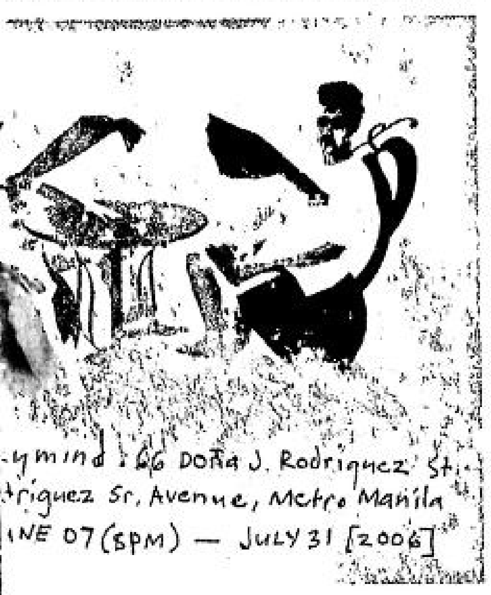
By Mike Melchor
Contributor

BERNARDO A. BANEZ WAS A 7-year-old boy from Baguio when he was orphaned after the bunker his family was sheltered in suffered a direct hit during World War II. He and a sister survived the Japanese bombing that took their parents' lives.

Together with another sister, who was away at that time, the three siblings struggled. Life was not easy. He took on odd jobs, he became a shoeshine boy, newspaper vendor, bus conductor—anything to bring home a modest amount at the end of the day. He somehow managed to get an education when he was not working.

As a working student, he enrolled in Fine Arts at University of the Philippines. He continued to earn his keep by doing posters for the Conservatory of Music and modeling for drawing classes. During this time, he changed his nickname to "Banz."

After graduation, he got into advertising and animation. He did everything from Christmas


-ymind : 66 Doña J. Rodriguez St.
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Pacena, Calubayan ride the 'Jelo Submarine'

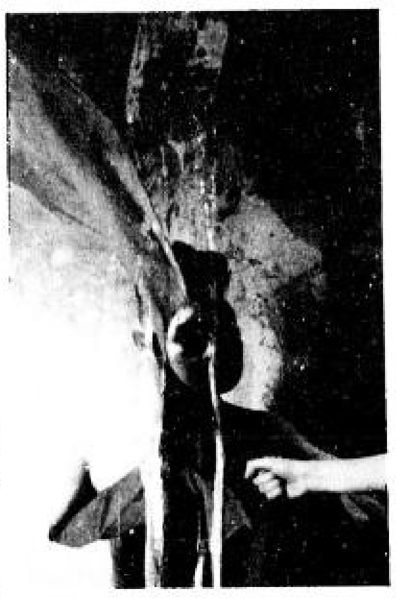
EXCITING YOUNG ARTISTS JAIME Pacena III and Buen Calubayan team up in "Jelo Submarine," a show of highly personal works on inward and outward journeys.

The exhibit opens on June 7, 8 p.m., at Big Sky Mind (66 Doña Rodriguez St., cor. E. Rodriguez Ave., QC).

The show consists of Pacena's striking digital art and Calubayan's intriguing drawings, paintings and installations.

Pacena is thesis adviser at the University of Santo Tomas College of Fine Arts and Design, while Calubayan works at the UST Museum of Arts and Sciences.

The show runs until July 31.

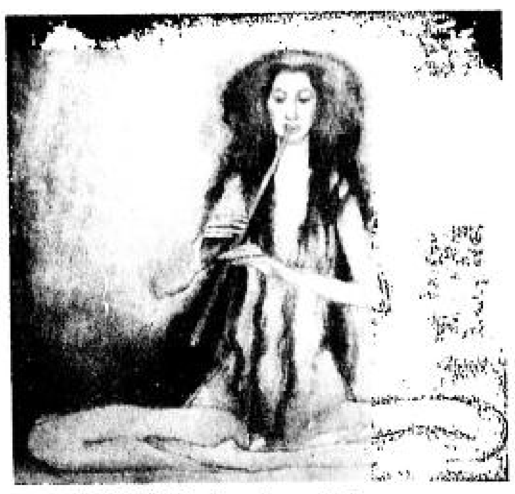


MEEK," by Pacena

VISUAL ARTS

Salvosa at C3

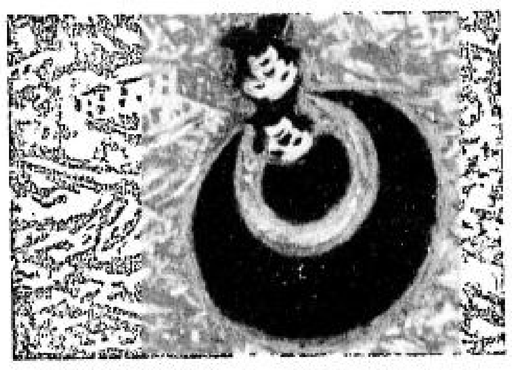
"Bighani," the 21st one-man show of Jonahmar Salvosa is ongoing until June 30, at C3 Events Place (18 Missouri St., North Greenhills, San Juan). Salvosa has won various awards such as the Art Association of the Philippines Annual contest, while his works have already been exhibited in various hotels and galleries. His murals and sculptures grace buildings and offices all over the world. Call 7262712, 7232347 or 9297811.



"BIGHANI," I by Jonahmar Salvosa

Rodriguez at Mag:Net

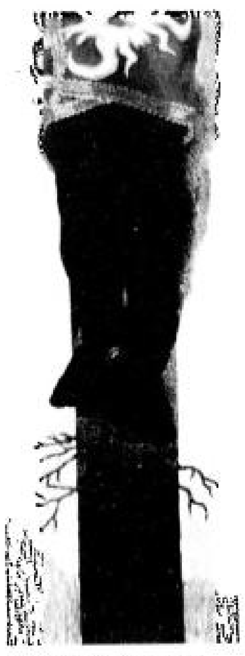
Mag:Net Gallery Paseo (Paseo Center, corner of Paseo de Roxas and Sedeno St., Makati) presents the first one-man show of Raul Rodriguez, "Revisions," June 8-30. The exhibit presents Rodriguez's series of small sketchpad-sized works rendered in pastel on paper and several large works done in oil on pastel. Call 8177895.



"SOMETHING in Us Imagines a Mushroom Cloud," by Raul G. Rodriguez

Jimenez's 'Bakal' sculptures

Pete Jimenez presents his eight one-man show, "Bakal," until June 17, at Mag:Net Gallery-Katipunan in Quezon City. The exhibit features Jimenez's small-scale sculptures made of welded steel discards. The works are visual puns, where the literal and figurative are combined. Call 9293191 or 4352631. Meanwhile, Jed Escueta's "Vice Begins" opens on June 6, at Mag:net Gallery-ABS (The Loop, ELJ Center, ABS-CBN Compound, Mother Ignacia Ave. cor. Eugenio Lopez St., QC). Call 4100995 or e-mail magnetplus@gmail.com



"UGAT," by Jesus Genotiva

Genotiva at One Workshop

One Workshop Gallery (2241 La Fuerza Plaza II, Don Chino Roces Ave., cor. Sabio St., Makati) presents Jesus Genotiva in his first solo, "Gamu-gamo," on June 7-21. A Fine Arts graduate of the Philippine Women's University, he has won the Metrobank, Shell and Nokia contests. The works consist of paintings and drawings on the Philippine social order, showing Genotiva's strengths as an illustrator and painter. Call 8105094 or 8192074.

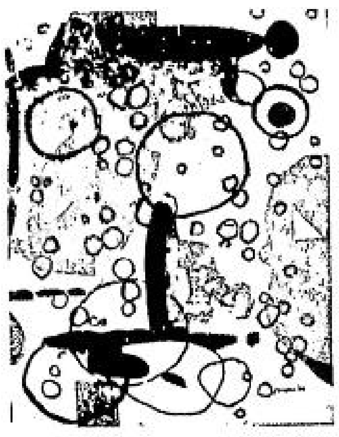
FEATI University recently mounted an exhibit in Galleria de las Islas in Intramuros, Manila, featuring works by students and faculty members of the College of Architecture and Fine Arts. Araceli Limcaco Dans, Feati's art consultant (third from left), leads the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Also present are Adolfo Jesus Gopez, Feati president; Milagros Lane, gallery owner; and Architecture and Fine Arts dean Joycelyn Mananghaya.

Art classes

Art Informal, an artist-run center for art and creativity, will hold workshops for adults and teens in June and July. Courses include drawing, painting and pottery. Call 7258518 or visit the school at 277 Connecticut St., East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City, or e-mail artinformal@yahoo.com

Alcazaren at Finale

Opening on June 9 at Finale Art File (4/F, LaO Center, Pasay Road cor. Makati Ave., Makati City) is Juan Alcazaren's "Recent Works." Mainly composed of found and discarded materials such as old animation cel acetates from the TV commercials the artist used in the '90s, discarded paper, old drawing and studies, the collages depict multi-layered worlds in which scenery is shifting, color contingent, and line an interruption. Referencing Bosch's painting "The Garden of Earthly Delights" juxtaposed with cartoon-like imagery, the artist has created an assembly of works that is at once dissonant and reverberating. Exhibit runs until June 30. Call 8132310 or 8125034.



DISCARDED art by Juan Alcazaren

Baldemor in Estonia

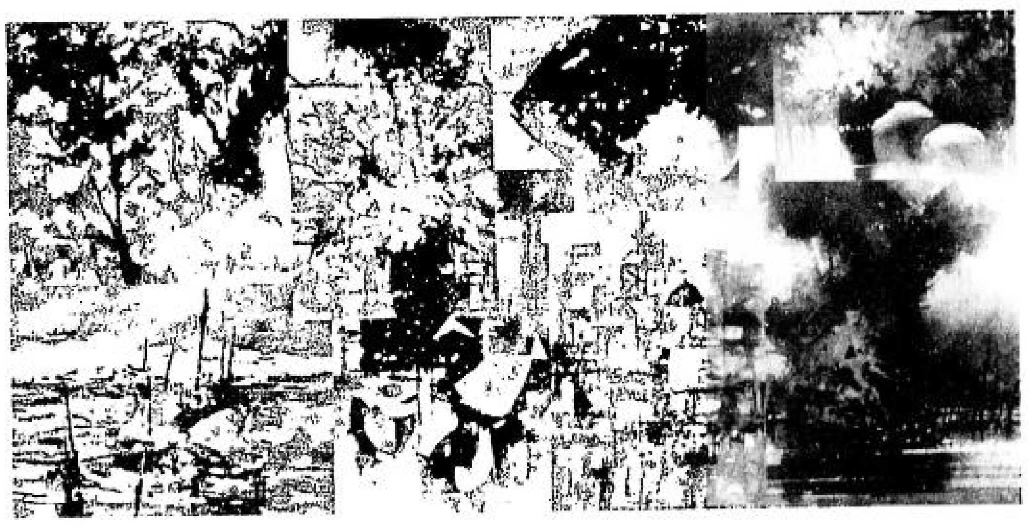
Manuel Baldemor will hold an exhibit at the Hall Gallery of the Estonian National Library on June 12-21. Baldemor is the first Filipino visual artist to be made an artist-in-residence in Talinn, known as the Medieval Pearl in the Baltic shore on Gulf of Finland, under the sponsorship of the Estonian Ministry of Arts and Culture.

Lacorte at Drawing Room

Irma Lacorte presents "Directions," until June 14, at The Drawing Room (Metrostar Bldg., 1007 Metropolitan Ave., Makati). The exhibit showcases Lacorte's works produced after her residency at the Vermont Studio Center under the Freeman Fellowship Grant in 2003. The overlapping images done in stencil are mostly symbols of travel, physical and emotional. Call 8976990/7877.

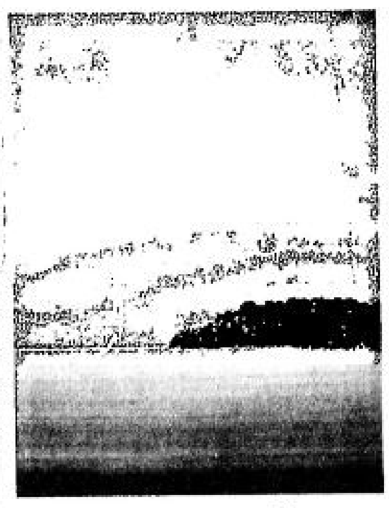
Ledesma photos at Alcove

Alcove Gallery presents glimpses of the timeless Europe as seen through the eyes of multi-awarded photojournalist Lester V. Ledesma in "Passage through Europe," June 9-23. Alcove Gallery is at Filipinas Heritage Library, Makati Ave., Ayala, Makati. Call 8921801.



EDGAR DOCTOR ROCKS ROCKWELL
Edgar Doctor's "Random Thoughts" runs until June 13, at the North Court, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell. Doctor is one of the country's top artists, excelling in watercolor, oil and acrylic, and in sculpture. The exhibit is mounted by the Yellow Door Gallery. Call 0920-9624347.

ez in retrospective



"A CALL for Peacespace"

cards to murals.

Banz eventually became an art educator and a full-time painter. He was active in the art circle. He admonished young artists to develop and discover their own distinct styles.

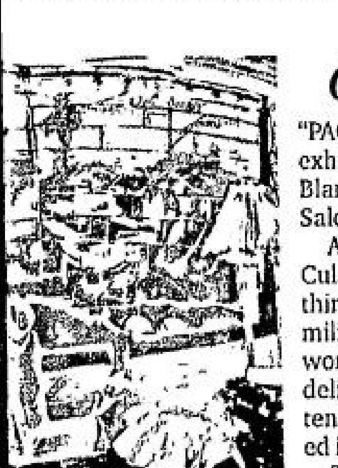
Life for Banz was, indeed, a long and interesting journey, which had molded and shaped him as artist and man. Seeking to bring peace and serenity into life through his art, he became inspired by Biblical readings, especially the story of Jesus calming the turbulent waters which brought panic to His disciples.

The inspiration is evident in his "Peacespace" works, depicting tranquil scenes of nature, a vast horizon, backed by slopes and hills in the distance, typically with a bird in free flight, lit from above with a serene and gentle light.

In today's hectic world the art of Banez gives us a chance to bring into our homes a "Peacespace," something to transport ourselves away from life's problems and recharge our spiritual batteries.

Also featured in the exhibit will be the remaining works from Banez's "Subliminal Satire" series, which depicts the food chain underwater. The fish are creatures of the sea, but the expressions on their faces and their actions are definitely human. These works clearly illustrate the artist's his sense of humor and background as an inker, cartoonist and animator.

"Peacespace Returns" will open at Artasia, Artwalk, 4/L, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City, on June 9, 6 p.m. The exhibit will run until June 23.

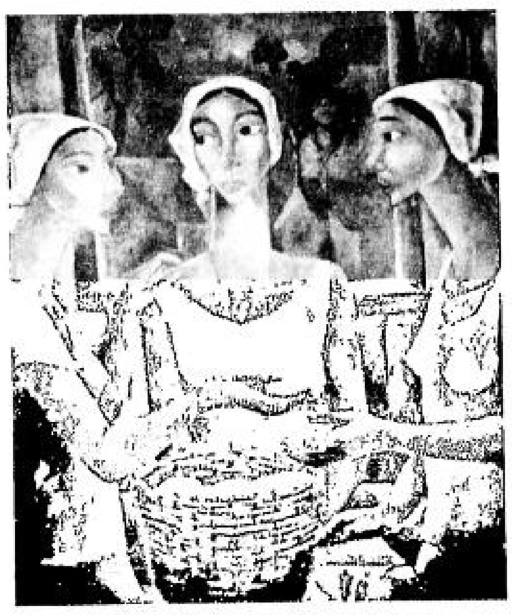


Culaba at Blanc

"PAGKAKAAYOS," THE THIRD SOLO exhibit of Melvin Culaba, is on view at Blanc Art Space (2E 107 HV de la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City).

A major prizewinner in the AAP Annual, Culaba probes into the question of how things are structured within the artist's familiar territories. The composition of his works is carefully planned and the imagery deliberately structured, resulting in an intense form of organized chaos as translated into the canvas.

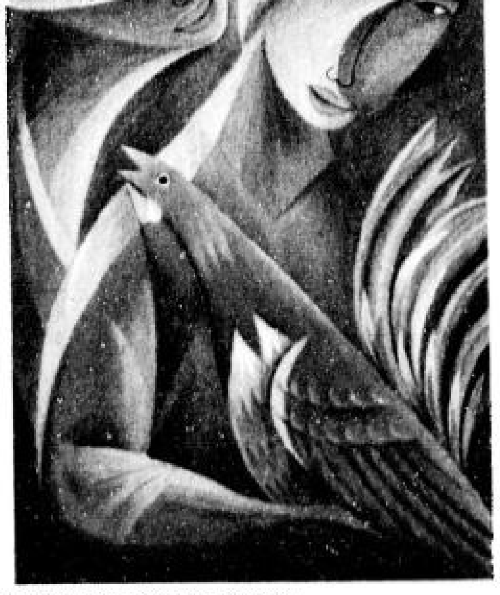
The show runs until June 17. Call 7520032.



"HATING Kapatid," by Felix Amoncio

Amoncio, Espiritu in Alabang

Felix Amoncio and Jun Espiritu are featured in "One On One," the anniversary exhibit of Galeria Fernando (Casa Susana, Casa Vicente Bldg., Madrigal Ave., beside the Alabang Town Center). Though both artists depict similar scenes and themes, Espiritu's light but bright hues and arched lines result in faces with pointed foreheads. They contrast yet complement the earthy aura of Amoncio's prominent-chinned characters. The show runs until June 15. Call 8506963 or 0928-2188516.



"SA PULA," by Jun Espiritu

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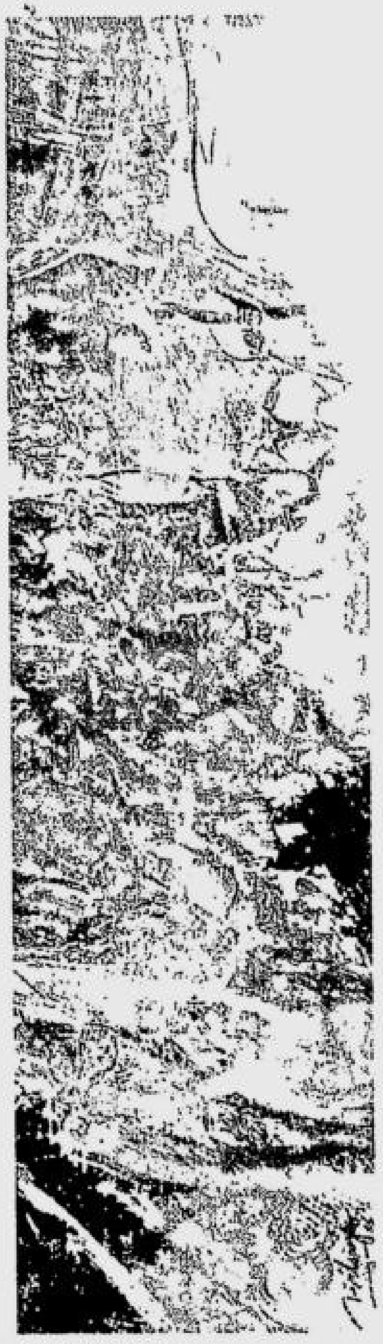
A reputable gallery on the fashionable Rue de Seine features the Filipino abstractionist



"SILENT Music"

Wilwayco in Paris

By Lito B. Zulueta

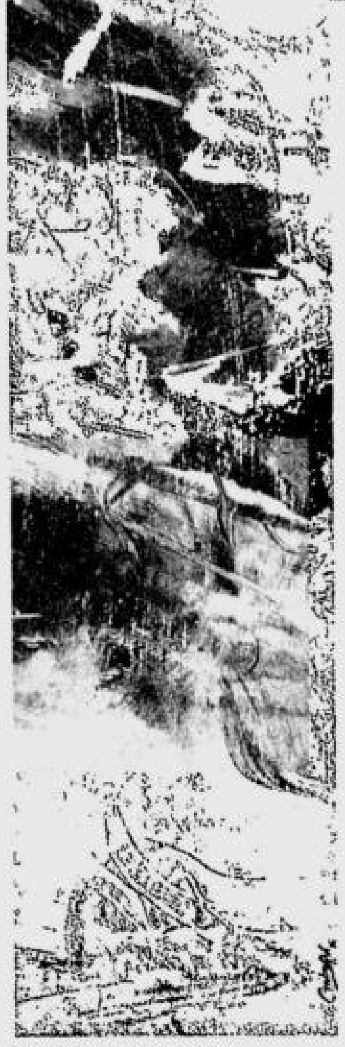
LIKE THE WIND, HE GOES, and silently, like ineffable music. Thus, without much fanfare, Edwin Wilwayco has been showing in Europe for barely two months now, the first in Germany last April, and this week, in Paris, where the Galerie Etiene de Causans on the Rue de Seine will open on June 7 "Silent Music," a suite of works inspired by the music of Antonio Vivaldi.

It's no mean feat to get a slot on the Galerie Etiene; its calendar is booked until 2007. But after a Filipino consular official in Paris showed gallery officials Wilwayco's portfolio, the Filipino artist got booked.

Earlier, Wilwayco's "Laden Sie Ein Zur" opened in Essen-Heidhausen on April 21. The works got good reviews from the local Westphalia press and were sold out. But Wilwayco was particularly pleased that two art professors of the University of Essen bought his works.

The Westphalia show consolidates the growing reputation of Philippine art in European circles, and proved the attraction and universality of Wilwayco's unique abstraction, which is expected to be reaffirmed in his Paris show.

In his Paris suite of paintings (mainly oil-on-paper), Wilwayco realizes once more the conceit of abstraction: that art is not a passive mirroring of nature; rather, it is an expressive ordering. Even realistic art is not a mere copying of external reality. Its techniques of anatomical detailing, composition, and light and shade are principles of ordering, instruments of expression, and devices of rendering. There is no such thing as "pure" or "passive" art.



"SILENT Music" XII

In a way, the "Silent Music" paintings are a critique of pure form. After all, painting seems diminished, even impoverished, by the exclusion of the outer world.

For example, the seasons, in genre painting or literature, conjure a whole range of sentimental, personal, social and religious values that are otherwise lost when the artist attempts at pure, that is non-descriptive, non-nature-based, aesthetics.

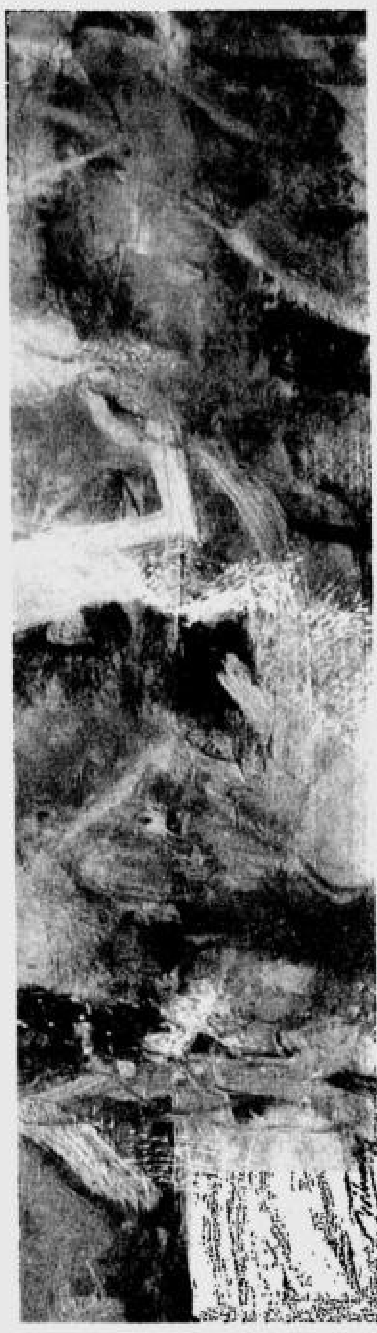
But to say that abstract art distills the outer world in utter purity is not exactly correct. Rather, abstract art discovers new qualities and relationships, just as poetry, when it breaks away from prose, does not exactly purify prose but rather discovers new verbal patterns, new ways of saying things. Abstract art is discovery and rediscovery.

Music

By making Vivaldi's concerto, "Four Seasons," the animating spirit of his art-making, Wilwayco transposes descriptive music onto his canvas, roughly approximating the movements of the seasons in appropriate colors and gestures that the viewer may consider as painted musical notes or applied effervescence. The result is not so much abstract expressionism as much as expressive abstraction.

Ultimately, Wilwayco's "Silent Music" is not so much a paean to nature but a rediscovery of nature. It is basically a restoration of the romance of nature that was repudiated by the modern abstract movement in the 20th century. If in the last century, abstraction was a critique of the content of representation as an ideal value, a repudiation of the old belief that nature could serve as a model of harmony for man, that social tensions, explorations of the self, the discovery of hidden urges and drives, and technological advances had become the determinants of the new (if rather conflicting and conflicted) sensibility, then Wilwayco's expressive abstraction of the 21st century reinstates the old order, exalting nature's moods as a unified sensibility and an adequate philosophy of life.

But what is restored is not exactly the old world, but rather, a new vision and a new creation.



"SILENT Music" C

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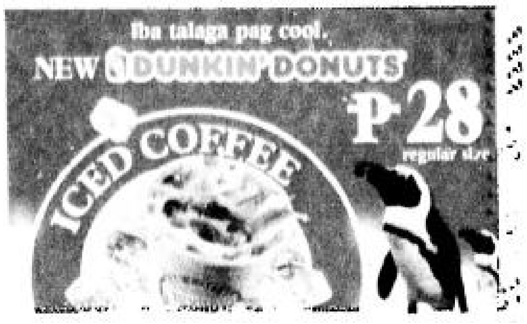
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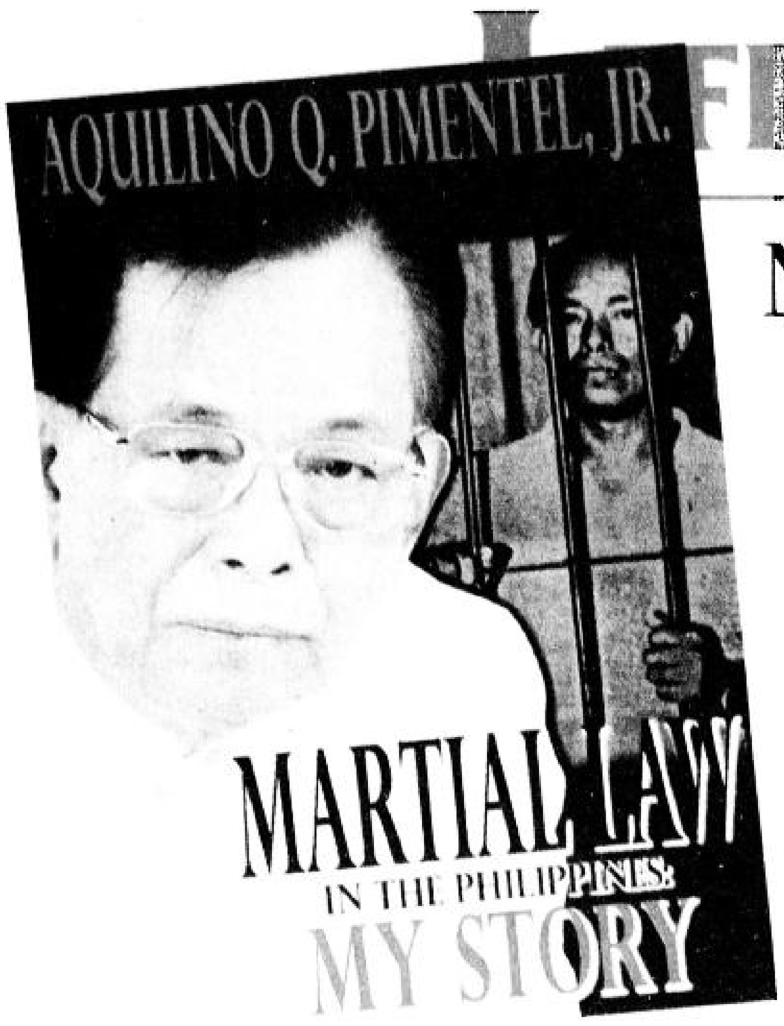
Nene Pimentel relives the horror, the horror



The senator comes up with a riveting history of Marcos and martial law

By Gerry Lirio

SEN. JOKER ARROYO CALLS him the "face of martial law"—or the poster boy of defiance to the one-man rule of President Ferdinand Marcos.

The boy named Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr., then a young *provinciano* lawyer, fought Marcos relentlessly; it eventually led to his arrest and detention, all a result of his refusal to embrace the dictatorship.

Pimentel outlived Marcos and is now telling his story. According to former President Corazon Aquino, Pimentel's book, about 600 pages, should have been titled "Living to Tell the Tale," if only because he survived the ordeal.

"Martial Law in the Philippines: My Story" will be launched on Wednesday at the Manila Hotel. It narrates Pimentel's martial-law experience, a story of courage, daring and much faith to stand up to the dictator when it was extremely dangerous to do so.

Written for two years, the book is Pimentel's recollection of and perceptions on what really took place in 1971-1986.

"If experience is the best teacher, Nene seemed impervious even to life's simplest instruction," Ar-

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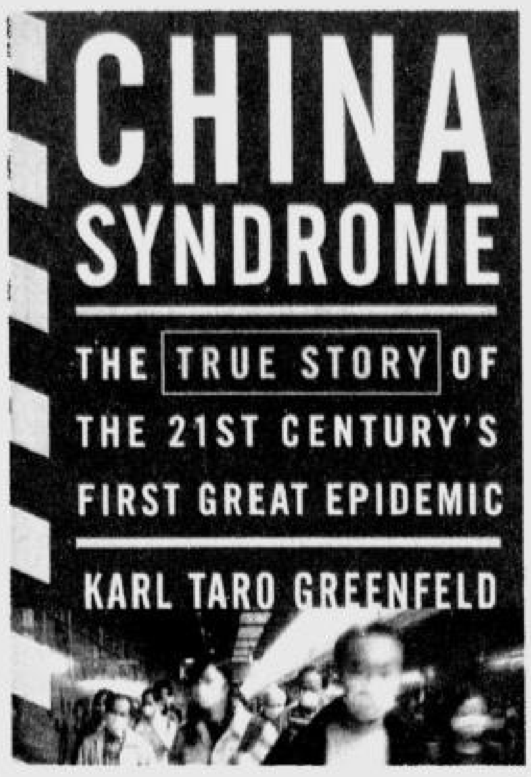
'China' crisis

Remember SARS? An engrossing look on the fearful emergence of the deadly virus



"China Syndrome: The True Story of the 21st Century's First Great Epidemic"
By Karl Taro Greenfeld
HarperCollins, New York
2006, 442 pages

By Ruel S. De Vera

THERE IS A DISTINCT DRAMA THAT comes with writing about disease, disaster and death. That nonfiction authors are chronicling a real-life cataclysm only adds to the siren song of reading about outbreaks and what we fear the most.

It is also why some of these books are beautifully written, such as Richard Preston's "The Demon in the Freezer," a maddeningly addictive potion of poetry and pathology.

This is partly why Karl Taro Greenfeld's "China Syndrome: The True Story of the 21st Century's First Great Epidemic" is truly frightening and powerful at the same time. This is a book about SARS, otherwise known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, that elusive virus that killed hundreds in 2003 and set off near-global panic.

For the survivors, it may seem like the virus just went away. Greenfeld tells the story of what really happened—and it isn't comforting.

Beginning each chapter is a count of patients infected and patients killed. When "China Syndrome" begins, on Nov. 1, 2002, only seven people had been infected with no fatalities.

It is eerie, as one flips the pages and gets deeper into the book, how fast those numbers rise. By Aug. 3, 2003, Greenfeld's counter stands at 8,445 people infected—and a staggering 876 people killed by SARS. It's a numbers game of exponential fatality.

Greenfeld, who headed Time Asia at the time of the virus' emergence, pieces together a remarkable tapestry of terror through exhaustive research and interviews, crafting a tale that is scarier than any piece of virus fiction. He weaves several real-time plots through "China Syndrome": the race to find the source and unravel the SARS RNA; the brave, if costly, sacrifice of medical professionals in stopping what seemed to be a new pandemic; how Greenfeld's staff would cover such a difficult story; and how the lives of real people were being almost cruelly, randomly erased by the new threat.

Human element

But perhaps the most astounding element in "China Syndrome" was a human element. Simply put, Greenfeld explains in damning detail how the Chinese government, by denying and deliberately covering up what was really happening in its territory, allowed the virus to spread, nearly triggering a worldwide calamity.

"As the world would soon discover, if everything that was known inside China had been shared with the world just a few weeks earlier, hundreds of lives would have been saved," Greenfeld points out. "Denial kills, as surely as any microbe."

All this scientific fact and journalistic detail is melded with Greenfeld's gift for imagery and description. Like the viruses themselves, Greenfeld's writing is precise and effective, perfectly designed for its intent. "China Syndrome" pursues its topic with a dizzying single-mindedness.

Aside from the book's thoughtful handling of what could easily have been dense scientific exposition, "China Syndrome" adds a "chasing-the-story" vibe by following Time Asia's attempt to properly cover the advance of the disease.

The conspiracy of silence that greets reporters and international representatives is chilling in its refusal to give in. It is clear that, if not for some Chinese doctors' willingness to defy the silence, things could have been much worse.

Greenfeld is particularly effective in narrating the front-line work of the doctors and nurses who faced down the unknown agent, some at the cost of their own lives: "It is remarkable, in all my reporting on SARS, how infrequently I came across a case of a medical professional refusing to treat a suspected patient."

Severe hypochondriacs should not read this book because it will undoubtedly unleash nightmares. As the book ends, Greenfeld tempers any optimistic note that mankind has seen the last of these deadly viruses.

They're changing, even as you read this sentence, evolving into something different. "Sooner or later, a random mutation will occur that will allow a virus particle to survive where previous iterations could not. Yet probability meant that it would have to be a species that was present in sufficient quantities to allow for that winning—or losing, for the human race—genetic lottery ticket."

Fittingly, "China Syndrome" ends with what hopefully is the end of the scourge of SARS, but the book notes that avian flu is now rapidly becoming a concern. With his grimly purposeful and powerful prose, Karl Taro Greenfeld paints a portrait of the pathogen as protagonist—and shows what happens when you find the apocalypse looking right back at you.

Available in hardcover at National Book Store

Book of plays by Casaje

"MGA PREMYADONG DULA," A COLlection of Lito Casaje's award-winning plays published by De La Salle University Press, will be launched at 7 p.m., June 6, at the Main Theater Lobby of Cultural Center of the Philippines.

The book features Casaje's five contemporary plays, namely, "Juan dela Cruz, New York City," "Editoryal," "Separasyon," "Matrimonyal" and "Padre de Familia," all of which have been staged previously except for "Matrimonyal."

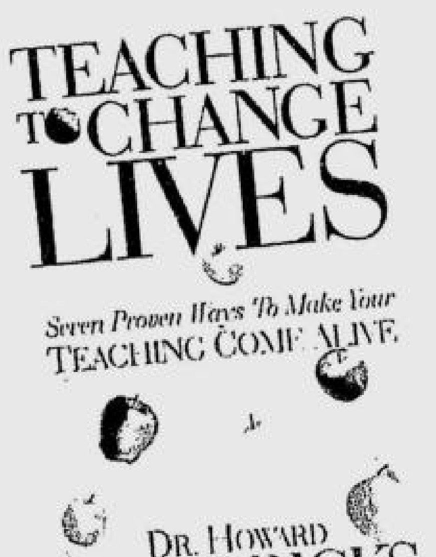
Characterized by fast-paced sequencing, realistic dialogue, uncluttered settings and credible characters, these dramas explore human relations as well as conflicts triggered by betrayal, love, separation, hubris, and loss of reputation and dignity.

Casaje, a Palanca-winning playwright, was recognized as a Local Fellow for Drama by the University of Philippines Creative Writing Center in Diliman in 1991-1992. He is the president and artistic director of Dramatis Personae, an alternative theater group founded in 1989. He is a known director and actor both on stage and on television, script/screenwriter, photographer, videographer and director of "Batang Pro" (1999) of Golden Harvest Films of Regal Productions.

He is a professor and chair of Production Design, School of Design and Arts, De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde; professor and chair of the Department of Language and Mass Communication, and director of Performing Arts at La Consolation College-Manila; guest lecturer at the English Department, College of Arts and Sciences, Holy Angel University (Angeles City); professor at the Department of Mass Communication, Institute of Arts and Sciences, San Sebastian College-Manila; and professor at Thames International Business School (Eastwood, Libis).

Theater, movie and television actors will do a dramatic reading of selected excerpts from the plays.

Transformational teaching



LIGHTHOUSE INSPIRATIONAL BOOKS AND Gifts, publisher of contemporary inspirational and Christian literature, is announcing the release of its newest title, "Teaching to Change Lives" by renowned American educator Dr. Howard Hendricks.

The 152-page book outlines seven proven, easy-to-grasp principles any teacher can apply. It also contains an application section in the end portion where readers can make plans of action to make the teaching process a meaningful and transforming exercise.

The author is a professor and chairman of the Center for Christian Leadership at the Dallas Theological Seminary in Texas, USA. He is author of several books and has been widely published in periodicals such as Decision, Moody and Christianity Today.

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Because being homeless doesn't make you a bum

By Angelo V. Suárez
Contributor

IT'S ABOUT DARNED TIME LOVERS of literature openly acquire access to the poetry of Nerisa del Carmen Guevara.

A blurb by poet/musician Lourd de Veyra for her collection, "Reaching Destination" (UST Publishing House; tel. 7313522, 4061611 loc. 8252, 8278) expresses his surprise at the book's being "mysteriously overdue, for she is one poet who has already arrived a long time ago."

That it was a finalist in last year's National Book Award is deceptive: While "Reaching Destination" certainly is a book of poems, it isn't just a book. As a book-and-CD project, it is a venture into the possibilities not just of the oral tradition (any idiot can read a poem to an audience, though not always with pizzazz) but of the aural: The poems leap not only toward readers but also into the space surrounding listeners.

Listening, in this sense, becomes as good as reading—if not better; one must take note that the collection is at once book-and-CD, not book-plus-CD.

That which inhabits the domain of the ear—not necessarily linguistic and intelligible—is no mere addendum but is as mainly content as those which inhabit the spaces associated with eye and mouth (as in reading quietly and out loud).

We can only hope that the Manila Critics Circle—the body responsible for the National Book Awards—are well aware of the collection's inherent duality which is its singular—and not single— achievement.

Nerisa herself confesses to a preoccupation with space in the book's closing essay, "The Search for Home." It is for this reason that most of the poems in the collection are brief; a creature after all has more space for maneuver if s/he is small.

The author's own physical smallness (Nerisa appears thin and fragile as paper) seems to translate well into economy of words, for according to her, "I could fit anywhere[…], I travelled light, was light. I could slip through crowds. What was, probably, a cramped space for any individual was space enough for me and then some."

In "Reaching Destination," form and content merge, thus form becomes content, becomes contented with what little (or greatness in being little) it has. Observe: "How do you survive when the majority is against what you are? By being small. By saying less. By wanting almost nothing at all and keeping, holding in precious high regard only the moment in front of you. Because you have nothing else but that. Do not hope for more."

However, this apparent contentment communicates a deeper discontent—an unrest, if not restlessness. Nerisa—no longer author but persona, as speaking subject—wants to travel light because she wants to travel in the first place, to "search for home."

If, in Lourd's words, Nerisa as poet has, in fact, long arrived, Nerisa as persona is only about to arrive, if arrival is at all possible.

"Reaching Destination" is therefore the partial documentation of a journey, the memoirs of a speaker in transit. No wonder the title's verb itself is in the present progressive.

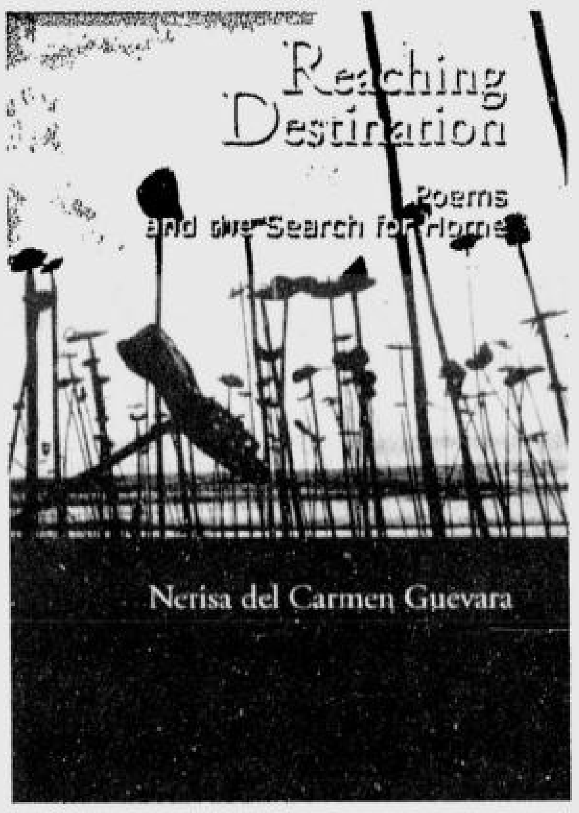
Arrival, while possibly impossible, is no doubt hoped for. Paradoxically the book begins with "End," where the persona boldly declares, "Everything ends in water[,]" and "Everything will end / Soon / Like all love will."

What appears plain deserves a second look: The poem's initial tone of sad submission may be as much an expression of hope as it is of hopelessness. The word "end" in this poem achieves an ambivalence matched only by its speaker's: Just as a reader may attach the notion of sadness to "end" as "conclusion" (especially in terms of love ending), s/he may also associate "end" with "purpose," as in the Machiavellian axiom "The end justifies the means."

Just as everything will end, everything also has an end, an underlying principle or meaning—which is [in] water.

After the title, it is the book's first poem that sets the journey motif. Every moment hence becomes a poem, becomes a body of water, a serpentine river, traveling toward that yearned-for whole, that complete and vast ocean where all things meet, all moments converge.

The poems cease to be records of a journey but are journeying themselves, are the journey itself.



The poems of Nerisa del Carmen Guevara leap not only toward readers but also into the space surrounding listeners

Nene Pimentel relives the horror, the horror

From page E1

royo says of Pimentel in the book. Indeed, while he survived the dark years, Pimentel was arrested and detained by Marcos not just once but four times, each time nearly breaking his family's hearts.

Pimentel, now 72, entered politics as a delegate to the 1971 Constitutional Convention. He was detained in Camp Crame for three months for opposing the 1973 Constitution which gave Marcos dictatorial powers.

He was jailed again for leading a demonstration against the farcical Interim Batasan elections in 1978, and again in 1983 on charges of rebellion. In 1985, he was arrested anew, this time for allegedly participating in an ambush in Cebu City.

"My Story" begins a few months after the imposition of martial rule, when Pimentel was arrested for the first time. It talks about the Marcos dictatorship from the point of view of Pimentel, then mayor of Cagayan de Oro City, and how his family based in Mindanao managed to endure it.

Passion

"Many people have written and will continue to write about the infamous years," Aquino writes in the foreword, "but no many can tell the story of martial law with [as much as Pimentel's] passion."

But the book is not just about the Pimentels. It also tries to tie some loose ends in one of the darkest episodes in the nation's history, from the 1971 Constitutional Convention to Proclamation 1081, from the assassination of Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. to the 1985 snap presidential elections, involving people, living and dead.

For instance, Pimentel tries to answer some questions, among them: Who were the Marcos boys who engineered the election of Carlos Garcia as president of the 1971 Convention? Who was Eduardo Quintero and what was the story about Marcos's alleged bribery of him and other delegates? What role did Gilberto Duavit play in the convention?

Other questions: Did the Big Four bomb the Liberal Party meeting in Plaza Miranda? Who plotted the daredevil rescue of Ninoy from Fort Bonifacio? How did Heherson Alvarez and Romy Capulong escape from martial-law agents? The answers enthrall.

Or: Why did Napoleon Lechoco hold Ambassador Benjamin Romualdez in the Philippine Embassy in Washington, DC? How did Supreme Court Chief Enrique Fernando lose his credibility at the height of the investigation of the Aquino-Galman double-murder case? Is it true that Cory Aquino crossly received Philip Habib, personal envoy of US President Ronald Reagan, before the Edsa Revolution?

Says Aquino: "Nene tells it all in his personal account of those days which were both exciting and terrifying." Who was it who said that a great book emerges from an upheaval in one's soul?

All this time he was writing the book, Pimentel lost weight, developed creaking joints and pain in his eyes. He talked to friends and other martial-law colleagues, and went through video clips and bundles of personal documents that are now in the book.

Arroyo recalls Pimentel did not enjoy getting arrested and detained. "Indeed, as far as Nene was concerned, life was not trying to teach him the obvious, which was to quit, a lesson he couldn't learn," Arroyo says. "On the contrary, it was Marcos who just couldn't learn—in election after election that the dictator stole from Nene and the Filipino people —to uphold the Constitution and the laws. Nene wasn't just being bullheaded. He was just being persistent, like a tireless teacher of mentally challenged students of democracy like Ferdinand Marcos."

THE TOP-SELLING NON-FICTION BOOKS

From Solidaridad Bookshop

'The History of Mindanao, Volume I'

By Reuben R. Canoy, International School Publication, Cagayan de Oro (P600)

A revealing account of the island of promise by a Mindanao patriot

'Adios, Patria Adorada: The Filipino as Ilustrado, The Ilustrado as Filipino'

By Alfredo Roces, De La Salle University Press (P470)

A social and political history of the Filipino enlightened elite

'Why We Are Poor: Heroes in the Attic, Termites in the Sala (Collection of Essays)'

By F. Sionil Jose, Solidaridad Publishing House (P500)

Scathing social essays on the Filipino malaise by the National Artist for Literature

'Terror in Manila,February 1945'

By Antonio Perez de Olaguer (P400)

An abridged translation of "El Terror Amarillo en Filipinas," the definitive eyewitness account of the horrors of the Japanese retreat from Manila

'Authentic though Not Exotic: Essays on Filipino Identity'

By Fernando Nakpil Zialcita, Ateneo University Press (P470)

An anthropologist's take on what constitutes the Filipino

'Understanding Mindanao Conflict'

By Patricio P. Diaz (P700)

A political scientist's account of the problems facing Mindanao

'Under the Crescent Moon: Rebellion in Mindanao'

By Marites Danguilan Vitug and Glenda M. Gloria, Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (P300)

Respected women-journalists tackle the Mindanao conflict.

FOREIGN TITLES:

'Juan Carlos: Steering Spain from Dictatorship to Democracy'

By Paul Preston, W.W. Norton (P1,750)

A much-respected expert on Spanish history in the Anglo-American world explains how the House of Borbon modernized itself and Spain.

'The 48 Laws of Power'

By Robert Greene, W. W. Norton (P900)

The best-selling book for those who want power, watch power, or want to arm themselves against power. Greene has created an heir to Machiavelli's "The Prince," espousing principles such as, everyone wants more power; emotions, including love, are detrimental; deceit and manipulation are life's paramount tools.

Anyone striving for psychological health will be put off at the start, but the authors counter, saying "honesty is indeed a power strategy," and "genuinely innocent people may still be playing for power." Amoral or immoral, this compendium aims to guide those who embrace power as a ruthless game, and will entertain the rest.

'Jihad vs. McWorld: Terrorism's Challenge to Democracy'

By Benjamin R. Barber, Ballantine Books (P750)

An engaging account of the world after 9/11.

Solidaridad Bookshop is near the corner of Padre Faura and Adriatico Streets in Ermita, Manila. Call 5255038.

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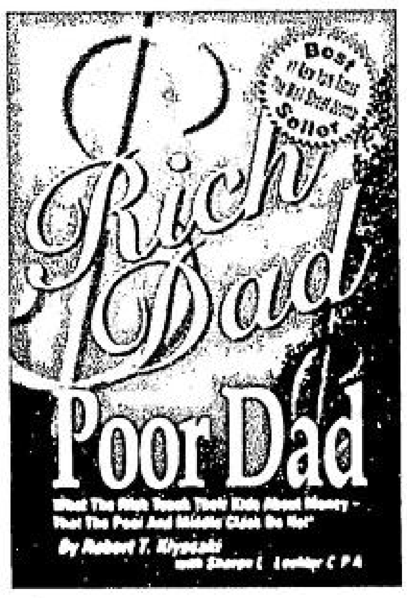

'Rich Dad, Poor Dad'

By Robert Kiyosaki"

Robert Kiyosaki developed his unique economic perspective through exposure to a pair of disparate influences: his own highly educated but fiscally unstable father, and the multimillionaire eighth-grade dropout father of his closest friend. The lifelong monetary problems experienced by his "poor dad" (whose weekly paychecks, while respectable, were never quite sufficient to meet family needs) pounded home the counterpoint communicated by his "rich dad" (that "the poor and the middle class work for money," but "the rich have money work for them").

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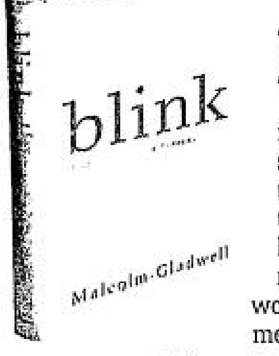
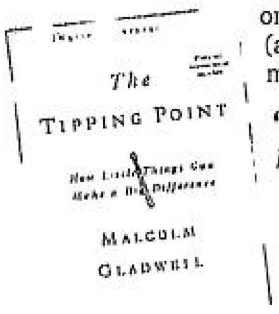


'Blink'

By Malcolm Gladwell

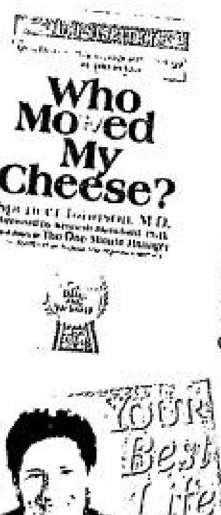
Malcolm Gladwell provides an entertaining and illuminating look at how we make snap judgments—about people's intentions, the authenticity of a work of art, even military strategy. He concludes, after studying how people make instant decisions in a wide range of fields from psychology to police work, is that we can make better instant judgments by training our mind and senses to focus on the most relevant facts—and that less input (as long as it's the right input) is better than more.



'The Tipping Point'

By Malcolm Gladwell

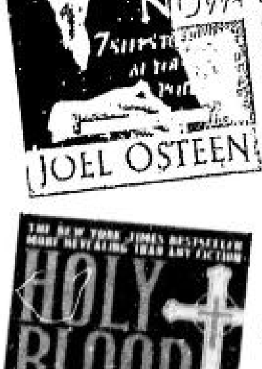
The premise of this facile piece of pop sociology has built-in appeal: little changes can have big effects; when small numbers of people start behaving differently, behavior can ripple outward until a critical mass or "tipping point" is reached, changing the world.



'Who Moved my Cheese?'

By Dr. Spencer Johnson

Change can be a blessing or a curse, depending on your perspective. The message of "Who Moved My Cheese?" is that all can come to see it as a blessing, if they understand the nature of cheese and the role it plays in their lives. "Who Moved My Cheese?" is a parable that takes place in a maze. Four beings live in that maze: Sniff and Scurry are mice—nonanalytical and nonjudgmental, they just want cheese and are willing to do whatever it takes to get it.



'Your Best Life Now'

By Joel Osteen

In this straightforward guide, Joel Osteen gives you a way to improve your life for good and help you experience victory, joy, and satisfaction every day. He offers you unique insights and encouragement that will help you overcome every obstacle you may encounter. As you put the principles found in these pages to work today, you will begin living "Your Best Life Now"!

Holy
Blood
Holy
Grail

'Holy Blood, Holy Grail'

By Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln

Explosive, thought-provoking, fiercely compelling, "Holy Blood, Holy Grail" breaks bold new ground with its shocking conclusions about the lineage of Christ and the legacy of the Holy Grail. Based on decades of research, filled with eye-opening new evidence and stunning scholarship, this authoritative work uncovers an alternate history as shocking as it is believable.

What's Keeping Sam Milby Glowing these Days?

Sam's face looks so bright and radiant nowadays. He looks so beaming that it's the undeniable luster of someone in love. Well, indeed it's love radiating in his face. But Sam's lady admirers need not despair: his latest darling is not a girl, in fact, it's a soap. It's **Dermablend Papaya-Orange Soap.** The unique combination of pure **Papaine extract** from **Papaya** and natural **Orange extract** from real **Orange** is the most effective, all-in-one skincare regimen as it cleans, whitens and moisturizes the skin all at the same time.

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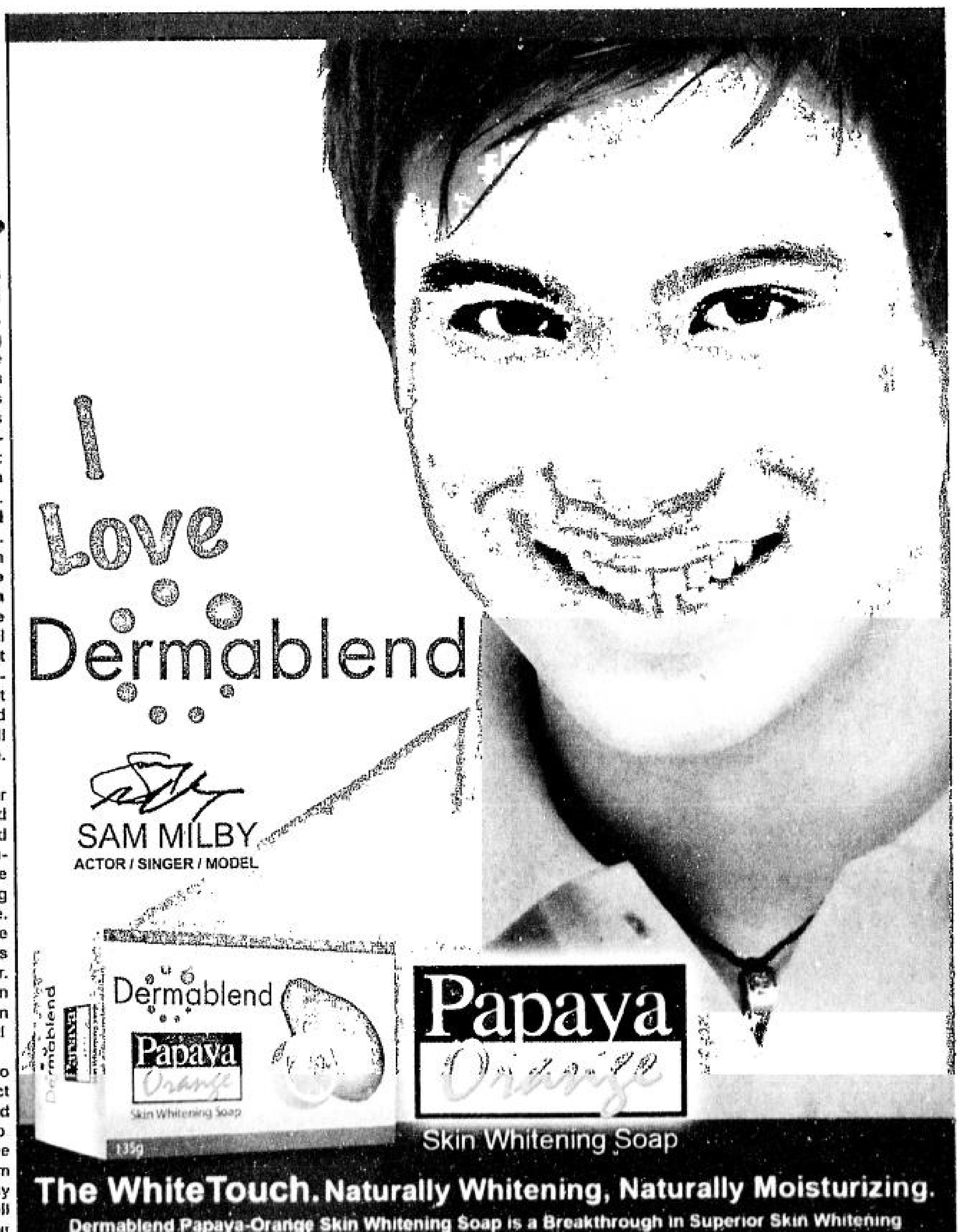
Now, like Sam, you too can achieve that perfect glow with Dermablend Papaya-Orange soap. Use it regularly and see your skin transform from dry and dull to rosy and soft. People will certainly marvel at your beauty! Like Sam, you too will definitely fall in love with Dermablend Papaya-Orange Soap. Even Sam himself won't help but be amazed when he sees you!



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Super weddings and Superman in Mr. & Ms.

ARE YOU READY TO TAKE THE PLUNGE?

The June issue of Mr. & Ms., "the Supermonthly of the Body, Mind and Spirit," has a series of features on weddings and everything bridal.

Learn about Vedic Weddings and tips to a happy marriage, the Muslim way.

The article, "Reinventing Weddings and Marriages," checks sexist shades in the marriage ritual. Should not "You may kiss the bride" be "You may kiss each other" in the name of man-woman equality? It's one of the questions the article tries to answer.

Super monthly of the Body, Mind and Spirit
Mr.& Ms.
RAYMART SANTIAGO & CLAUDINE BARRETTO
I Thee Wed!
Mr. & Ms. Bridal Issue Special
IS HE REALLY THE ONE?
Of Destiny & Soulmates
CHRISTIAN, MOSLEM
& Vedic Weddings
REINCARNATION
OMEN
PRAYERS
30 YEARS

"You are the only one I snubbed, but now, you are the only one I truly love," reads a part of actor Raymart Santiago's wedding vow. Uncover the complete version of his and bride Claudine Barretto's vows which they exchanged during their nuptials, touted as the wedding of the year.

Mr. & Ms., the only magazine that focuses on the paranormal, discusses the popular topic on soulmates. Is your partner really the one for you? Find out.

The June issue also honors fathers. Actor-politician Bong Revilla is featured. "I take time to sit down and talk with them on a one-on-one basis. I always communicate with them," says Bong. The senator reveals his own father's (Ramon Revilla Sr.) style of disciplining. Mind you, it involves a whip.

A feature on reincarnation dwells on the possibility that a grandfather or a father could be reborn as a son or even a daughter. Read more about reincarnation in the June issue.

Columnists Jaime Licauco and Mariel Francisco explain the healing power of prayer, based on scientific studies.

Further discussion on Dan Brown's "The Da Vinci Code" makes the Mr. & Ms. June issue more interesting. What does the Bible say about the matter? Where did Brown's facts really come from?

Other burning issues, including global warming and charter change, are dissected. Columnist/activist Malu Marin notes the effects on the lesbian and gay community of constitutional change.

Superman, whose movie franchise is being revived, is featured in the issue's special gatefold. Get acquainted with the newest actor to play the man of steel, Brandon Routh.

Mr. & Ms. is available at Rustan's Supermarket, National Book Store, Filbar's, 7-11, Papyvore, C.A. Communications, the Garage, Magnet Plus, Cash and Carry, and other popular outlets.

Book on parish community

A BOOK THAT CHRONICLES IN WORDS and pictures the first six years of a young parish community will be launched on June 10, 3 p.m., at Our Lady of Pentecost Parish Church in Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

Titled "In This Place," the book provides a template for community and church building. It is divided into two segments.

The first contains photographs of the new church by well-known photographer Pancho Escaler, with the accompanying text explaining the meaning and symbolism behind the design of every detail of the structure.

The second segment is an account of the community's journey toward building itself and its church. It was written by members of the parish themselves.

Our Lady of Pentecost Parish Church is on the corner of Celedonio Salvador and Fabian de la Rosa Streets in Loyola Heights.

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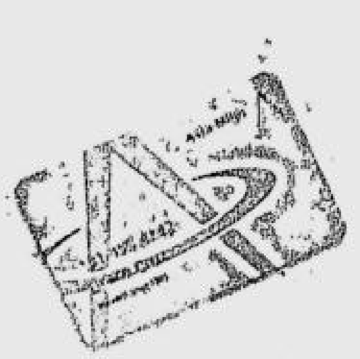

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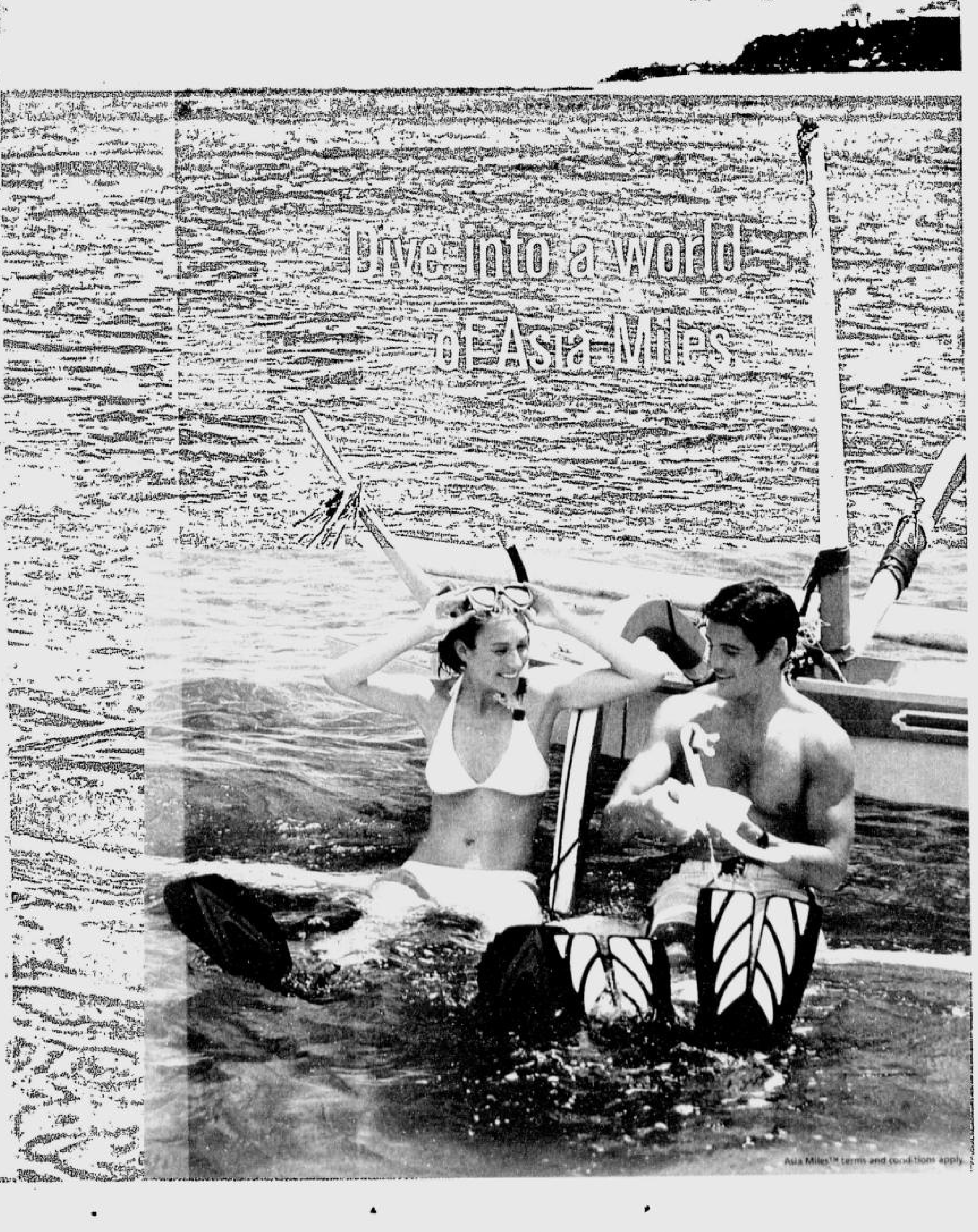
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■ SPORTS / A23

Sharapova, Mauresmo booted out of French Open singles

■ ACROSS / A13

Sayyaf threatens attack on US troops in Jolo

■ NEWS / A2

Vilma to quit politics in 2007, says Ralph

■ ENTERTAINMENT / A2-1

Autistic teen in first batch of RP 'Idol' hopefuls

A year after 'Garci,' GMA on solid footing–Bunye

A YEAR AFTER THE "HELLO GARCI" SCANDAL and a dangerous political storm broke over her head, the "*taray*" seemed to be back in President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"I think today is better than yesterday and tomorrow will even be better," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye yesterday when asked if Ms Arroyo considered the most serious political crisis to confront her to be over.

A YEAR/ A15

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

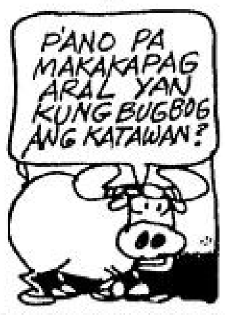
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, June 6, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 178 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Teacher wants school caning revived in Kenya

MUTONGUNI, KENYA—Nicholas K. Kaloki's icy glare and booming baritone are his only legal weapons these days against wayward students, now that Kenya's government has officially disarmed him of his long wooden stick.


P'ANO PA MAKAKAPAG ARAL YAN KUNG BUGBOG ANG KATAWAN?

TEACHER/ A6

2 leftists killed in wake

4 church workers also get threats

By Cyrain Cabueñas and Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

BORONGAN, EASTERN Samar—The blood of leftist militants just won't stop flowing.

A week after men on a motorcycle gunned down former New People's Army leader Sotero Llamas in Albay, a lone assassin wearing a bonnet over his head shot dead a Bayan Muna member and a leader of a farmers' group during a wake on Sunday night here.

Bayan Muna's David Costuna, 48, and Arcadio Macale, 60, president of the local Barangay Agrarian Reform Council, were the 19th and 20th militants murdered around the country in the past two months.

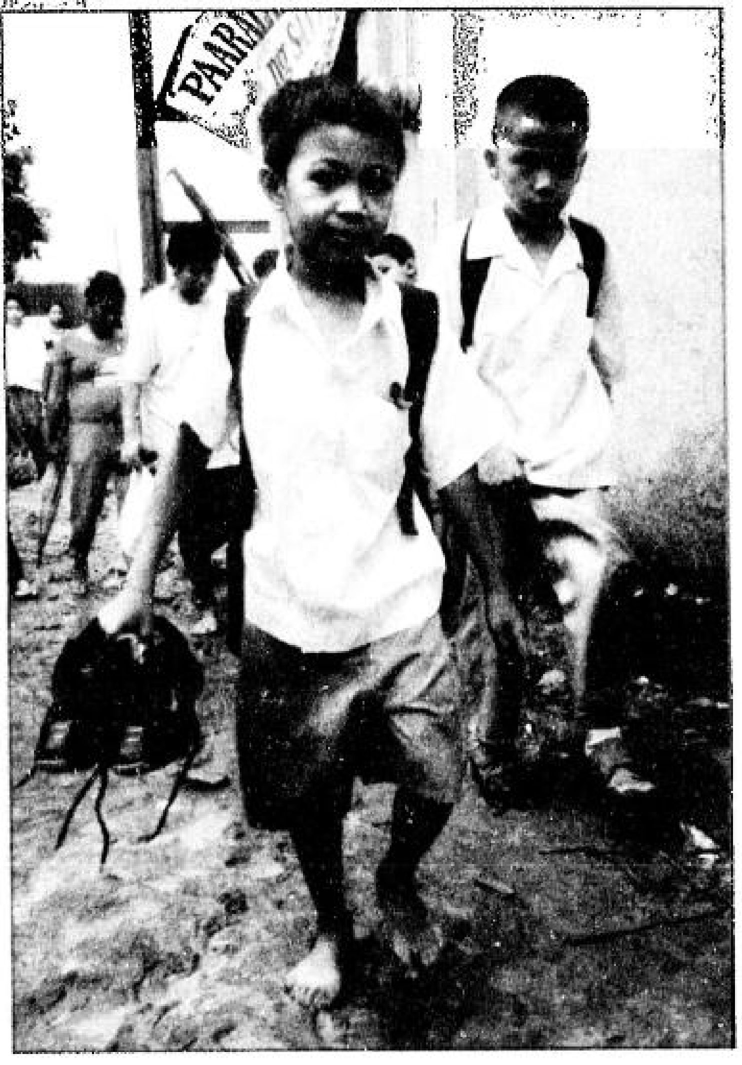
Their deaths brought to 228 the total number of activists assassinated since President Macapagal-Arroyo assumed office in 2001, according to an INQUIRER tally.

As news of the latest murders spread, the human rights group Karapatan disclosed that four church workers in Nueva Ecija had received death threats.

One of the threats, directed against Aglipayan priest Renato Respicio, was contained in a let-

2 LEFTISTS/ A15

Students cope with old woes in school opening



DESPITE the late afternoon downpour, pupils welcome the first day of classes with enthusiasm and joy at the San Diego Elementary School in Batasan Hills, Quezon City. One of them spares his new shoes from the mud. RAFFY LERMA

By Alcuin Papa and PDI Bureaus

OLD WOES, LIKE THE LACK OF classrooms, greeted students in public elementary and high school schools across the country at the opening of classes yesterday, but most students and teachers were coping.

Others did not have the patience of Job and staged rallies to protest the classroom shortage and the collection of school fees.

At Pampanga High School, Central Luzon's biggest secondary school with 8,926 enrollees as of yesterday, first year student Hannah Rae Cruz attended classes in a room half-covered in volcanic sand.

Ducking and stooping were skills she realized she should learn so she would not hit her head on the low ceilings.

"It's OK (to bear the discomfort) as long as I'm in school," said Cruz, who was among the special students in the arts.

In Metro Manila, students found their classrooms still crowded but others found their old classmates gone.

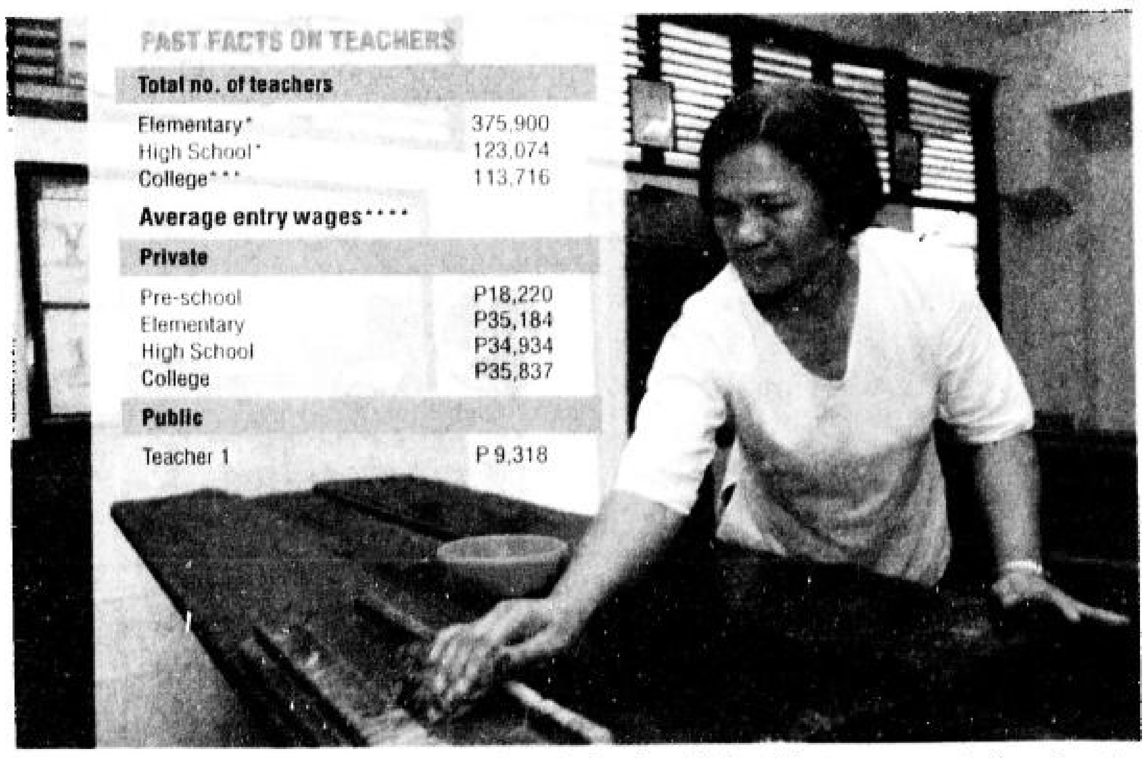
The Department of Education said some areas had shortages of classrooms, but in others, there

STUDENTS/ A4

More education stories on Pages A6, A18

STATE OF RP EDUCATION

Decline in quality hobbles job creation program



FAST FACTS ON TEACHERS

Total no. of teachers	
Elementary*	375,900
High School*	123,074
College***	113,716
Average entry wages****	
Private	
Pre-school	P18,220
Elementary	P35,184
High School	P34,934
College	P35,837
Public	
Teacher 1	P 9,318

MA. ZENAIDA Dimapilis, a Grade 6 teacher in agricultural and industrial arts, prepares for her class at the Rosauro Almario Elementary School. *(For more information on the figures, see Page A6.)*

(Third of a series)

i-TEAM Report
Fernando del Mundo
Chief, PDI i-Team

CONCERNED EDUCATORS HAVE been wracking their brains to come up with solutions to raise the quality of Philippine education to make Filipinos competitive in jobs that are the wave of the future.

Opportunities are being created by the ICT (information communications technology) revolution and by the growing trend to outsource support services from the First World to developing countries.

"We are a country whose strength is in the service sector. We cannot be industrialized," says former Education Secretary Florencio "Butch" Abad. "We have already missed our chance to modernize our agricultural sector."

But the country is the beneficiary of outsourcing business processes, according to Abad.

He says human resources development is critical in the service sector, whether one exports nurses, caregivers, engineers and programmers or call center agents.

Abad says the country's potential to create thousands of jobs every year is hindered by the declining quality of local education.

The Philippines has not been able to meet the challenges from advances made in Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

The thrust of government should be toward a vision that would transform the country into a knowledge-based society, according to the former education secretary.

"Very critical in this direction

DECLINE/ A6

Teachers taught: Say it right

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE LESSON WAS ENGLISH PRONunciation and according to this kindergarten book, "avocado," "narra" and "abaca" were enunciated with a long "a."

The book belonged to Karen, daughter of longtime English teacher and language trainer Chrisma Bangaoil. Karen was then in kindergarten in a reputable school in Metro Manila.

Bangaoil, 34, who taught language for eight years in high school at San Beda College, said there was no way avocado, narra and abaca should be pronounced the same as "bake," "lake" or "cake."

"Maybe the intention was to 'Filipinize' the lesson but the examples were wrong," she said in an interview with the INQUIRER on Friday. "We don't have long a's in Filipino as in English."

Bangaoil's concern went beyond her daughter's case. She feared that many others like Karen were being taught crucial errors on language. And these errors would most likely stay with the children as they grow up, she said.

Two years ago, Bangaoil was given an opportunity to make a

TEACHERS/ A4

'Nicole' admitted to 'sex,' says US probe report

By Volt Contreras and Tarra V. Quismundo

LAWYERS DEFENDING THE American Marines charged in the Subic rape case yesterday continued pounding on "Nicole's" credibility, this time citing portions of a US Navy fact-finding report that they claimed was "favorable" to the four accused.

The 22-year-old alleged victim, identified in media only as Nicole, claimed she was raped on Nov. 1 by Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith while Lance Corporals Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis as well as Staff Sgt. Chad Carpentier cheered him on.

One defense lawyer noted that the complainant "never used the word rape" but only the word "sex" when she first confided the alleged incident to another US serviceman who was eventually interviewed by the US Naval Criminal Investigative Service.

The same American soldier, identified in the NCIS report as one Bamberger, said Nicole had also admitted that a condom was used in the sex act.

When Bamberger asked her "why would a rapist use a condom," Nicole supposedly "freaked out," the report said.

Jose Justiniano, counsel for Silkwood, managed to draw the court's notice to these accounts in his cross-examination of Ronald Beltz, resident agent in Manila of the NCIS and the third witness presented by the prosecution.

Justiniano made Beltz read out portions of the NCIS report, which formed part of the prosecution's evidence.

The lawyer later said in an interview after the hearing that he employed this tactic because the report, although introduced by the prosecution, had "portions favorable to us."

"Just like what was said by a US serviceman, Bamberger, who was apparently a friend of the complainant's and who was later in-

NICOLE/ A15

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Central Luzon, Southern Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY KATE V. PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/06/05/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	**Roxas**	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

Cops eye 'inside job' in Sanchez case

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—POLICE ARE looking into a possible "inside job" in last Thursday's bombing of the vehicle of Batangas Gov. Armando Sanchez that killed two of his aides, the head of the special team conducting the investigation said yesterday.

Sanchez's camp, meanwhile, offered a P1-million reward to anybody who could provide information that would lead to the solution of the crime.

Senior Supt. Ricardo Padilla said his team had placed all the bodyguards and security officers assigned to the governor under investigation and asked them to undergo lie detector tests "just to clear things up."

He said the fact that someone was able to plant a bomb in Sanchez's Hummer H2 showed a security lapse on the part of the governor's security men.

"We want to find out if the security lapse was caused by plain stupidity or if it was intentional stupidity," Padilla told the INQUIRER.

Sought for comment, Sanchez's lawyer, Ferdinand Topacio, said an "inside job" was possible but dismissed the idea that only insiders were at work. He said the bomb could have been planted by an outsider in collusion with an insider who might have had an axe to grind against the governor.

Police and other officials had said earlier that they suspected organized crime groups involved in the illegal numbers game *jueteng*, oil pilferage, drug trafficking, extortion and hijacking could have been behind the attack on Sanchez.

Padilla said the provincial administrator, lawyer Ronaldo Geron, had told him that the monetary reward was meant to expedite the investigation. According to Geron, the money was put up by Sanchez's friends and supporters, Padilla added.

"We definitely welcome the putting up of the reward," Padilla said. "It may have a negative effect on our investigation because people might give us wrong information, but in a larger view, the reward definitely has a positive effect."

He said investigators had established that the explosive used in the attempt on Sanchez's life was TNT, or trinitrotoluene, and not C4 as earlier hinted at by the police.

Meanwhile, in Camp Crame, Chief Insp. Raynold Rosero said his antibomb team was still struggling to reconstruct the bomb from the few pieces it had gathered at the scene of the explosion.

Failing to find pieces of an alarm or digital clock, Rosero had suspected that the bomb was command-initiated, meaning one that used a cell phone, pager or remote control as the triggering device.

Chief Supt. Ernesto Belen, head of the PNP Crime Laboratory, said traces of TNT were found at the site and an examination of the evidence was ongoing at press time.

"The materials recovered were very limited, but initially, there were indications that high explosives (were used). There were also traces of TNT. But the examination is ongoing to determine specific (materials used in the bomb)," Belen said by phone.

Chief Supt. Prospero Noble, head of the Calabarzon police, said earlier that only a few groups had the capability to carry out bombings using high explosives such as C-4 or TNT. Included in this group, he said, were the communist New People's Army, the police and military, and groups with links to either of the two.

With a report from Luige A. del Puerto

Vilma to quit politics in 2007, says Ralph

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

LIPA CITY MAYOR VILMA Santos is not running for governor of Batangas and will be retiring from politics in 2007, according to the multi-awarded actress's husband, Sen. Ralph Recto.

Recto said his wife of 14 years had a one-percent chance of running for Congress and another one percent for governor of his home province in the Southern Tagalog region.

"Now I can say 98 percent that she will retire (from politics)," Recto told reporters. Mayor Vi, after all, has served Lipa City and its residents for nine years, he pointed out.

"You've done your share already. In my case, if I can have one more re-election, that would be nice but after that I can already retire so others will have a chance. You cannot (hold a position) all your life," said Recto, who served three terms as representative of the 4th district of Batangas before winning a Senate seat in 2001.

Recto said his wife would rather go back to "her first love—show biz."

"I'd rather watch her in more movies and I'd rather see her doing commercials," he said.

If he had his way, Santos should devote all her time to the family.

"She has three children—Lucky, Ryan and myself," Recto bantered. "I'd rather be with her at home; I'd rather that she took care of the three of us."

Recto, 42, said he takes pride in his wife's lucrative show biz career. He explained that his wealth come mostly from his wife's income from movies and commercial endorsements.

Recto, the grandson of the great nationalist Claro M. Recto, is the second wealthiest senator after Manuel Villar based on their 2005 statement of assets and liabilities. Recto declared a net worth of P267.3 million.

Batangas is in the news because of the attempted assassination of its governor, Armando Sanchez, a few days ago. *(See lead story on this page.)*

Recto said his brother, Vice Gov. Ricky Recto, definitely had nothing to do with the attempt on Sanchez's life as acknowledged by the governor's camp. He said politics in Batangas had always been "*maginoo* (gentlemanly)."

"I think it's economics, more than politics," Recto said, noting reports that the governor had provoked the ire of syndicates involved in oil pilferage, drug trafficking, extortion and hijacking of delivery trucks after he ordered the police to go after them a few months ago.

Recto could not say if JUETENG was also a reason for the attempt to kill the governor. Sanchez had been named in the Senate as one of the bigtime *jueteng* lords in the country.

Recto said the incident could escalate into more violence if the police fail to identify the culprits.

Who will finally receive award for FPJ?

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE FILM DIRECTOR EDDIE Romero were to accept the National Artist Award for the late actor Fernando Poe Jr. in behalf of the Poe family that would present no problem, the head of the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA) said yesterday.

"I'll have to confer with Malacañang on whether this is acceptable," Nestor Hardin, NCCA president, told the INQUIRER. "But as far as I'm concerned, I don't think this will be a problem, although this has not been done in the past."

At the same time, Hardin said he was not sure if Romero would accept the award, because the latest word the NCCA got from the Poe family was that none of its members, or even Romero himself, would attend the conferment rites.

Poe's wife, Susan Roces, had sent word to the NCCA on May 29 that she and her family would not be attending the Palace ceremony on Friday where Poe, who lost the 2004 presidential election to President Macapagal-Arroyo, would be conferred the National Artist Award for film.

Roces, apparently still bitter voiced after her husband lost to Ms Arroyo in a suspect election, said she would be sending Romero, a close friend of her husband's, to accept the award in behalf of the family.

The President's chief of staff, Michael Defensor, on Sunday expressed hope that Roces would send a family member because under Malacañang protocol, presidential awards such as the National Artist Award should be received, in posthumous cases, by the next of kin.

NCCA official Cecile Guidote-Alvarez said it was a time-honored practice in the NCCA for the relative to accept the award for a posthumous recipient.

"If you look over the history of the award, the honor is received by the next of kin, the parent, spouse or children," Alvarez said in a phone interview.

She said the NCCA would meet today to get the official statement of the Poe family.

Malacañang yesterday reiterated its call to leave politics out of the affair.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, insisting that Poe deserved the award, said, "We ask that people should not use this as a platform for politicking."

Asked by reporters to react on calls made by some supporters of deposed President Joseph Estrada that the former actor also deserved to be given such an award, Bunye said the NCCA, not the Palace, made the nominations.

"We don't want to meddle in the internal procedures of the NCCA," he said.

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Neda: P125 wage hike will mean loss of jobs

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT Authority (Neda) strongly opposes the proposed P125 across-the-board wage hike and warns that it will result in massive unemployment and accelerate inflation.

"This wage hike is intended to promote worker welfare but it will backfire due to the rise in joblessness," Neda Director General Romulo Neri said in a statement in the wake of the filing in the House of Representatives of a bill providing for such an increase.

The bill—filed by Representatives Edcel Lagman, Renato Magtubo and Crispin Beltran—calls for implementing the increase in three tranches: P45 in October this year, P40 in 2007, and P40 in 2008.

Neri said that based on Neda's computations, a P45 across-the-board wage hike alone would result in the displacement of between 288,000 and 620,000 workers. He added that between 225,000 and 424,000 more could potentially be laid off in 2007, and between 210,000 and 365,000 could lose their jobs in 2008.

The projected figures on job losses factored in the current wage levels and the absorptive capacity of employers, Neri said.

The P125 wage increase would also result in inflation levels that could be difficult for the masses to absorb. Inflation is the rate of increase in prices of consumer goods.

The inflation rate stood at 7.1 percent year-on-year last April.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said the economy could absorb an average wage hike of only P26 to keep inflation within a range of 7.3 percent to 7.9 percent this year. Anything higher than P26 would result in a higher-than-programmed inflation, it said.

Neri warned that the projected drop in employment and rise in prices would dampen the country's economic growth. He said that the country's economic growth, as measured by the increase in its gross domestic product (GDP), could shed off 0.94 to 2.03 percentage points this year should the P125 across-the-board wage increase be pushed through.

He added that the country's GDP could drop by 0.74 to 1.39 percentage points next year, and by 0.66 to 1.15 percentage points in 2008.

"Imposing a one-size-fits all wage hike for the entire nation is crude and antiworker," Neri said, stressing that wage hikes should cover only minimum wages.

He proposed that firms simply go through their own process of collective bargaining with their employees because not all firms can afford an across-the-board wage hike. While others can afford it, some will have to cut work hours, if not lay off workers, he said.

GMA to seek CARP extension

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO WILL ASK Congress to extend the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) an extra five years after 2008 to help some two million farmers become self-sufficient, officials said Monday.

CARP is scheduled to end by 2008 according to law.

But 18 years after CARP was enacted in 1988, only a million out of three million beneficiaries had economically viable farms, Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman told reporters.

He said the DAR had also recently "discovered" more than 500,000 hectares of agricultural land that could be covered by the program.

"We are already in the final stage of land acquisition and distribution [but], along the way, we discovered that there are 500,000 more hectares that should be covered," Pangandaman said in a news conference.

He said that since CARP was enacted, some 3.7-million hectares of land had been acquired and distributed to farmer-beneficiaries across the country. He said DAR had initially identified some 4.29-million hectares for distribution but still needed to distribute 600,000 hectares.

"Our problem is that unless CARP is extended, the support services would also be abandoned and the farmers might turn around and sell back their farms to their old landlords," said Gerundio Madueno, agrarian reform undersecretary for support services.

Pangandaman said with the discovery of the 500,000 hectares and the need to distribute support to the farmer-beneficiaries, there may be a need to extend CARP.

But when asked about the chances of an extension being approved by a Congress stacked with landowners, he said, "I would not want to comment on that." *Norman Bordadora; AFP*

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Ferry blast witness recants

A KEY WITNESS IN THE REBELLION case against an Abu Sayyaf-linked group accused of bombing a ferry and killing 116 people has recanted his confession, claiming a Department of Justice prosecutor duped him into signing the statement admitting to the crime.

After his recantation, Malik Alimudin and his eight alleged conspirators in the bombing of the SuperFerry 14 in February 2004 sought the dismissal of the charges against them.

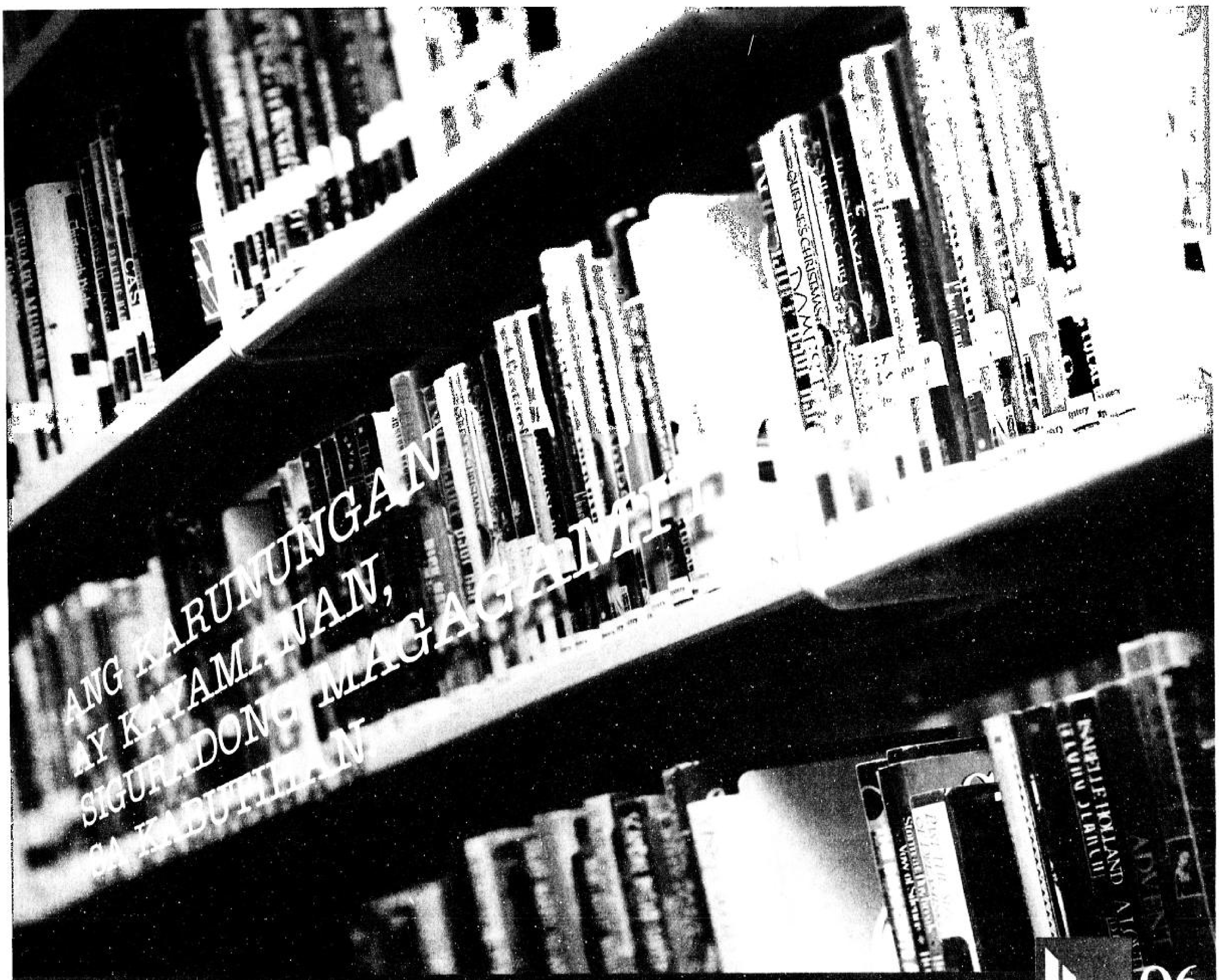
The accused included Hilarion de los Santos III, purported leader of the Rajah Solaiman Movement, a group of Christian converts to Islam allegedly associated with the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf.

Alimudin, of Zamboanga City, was arrested along with seven relatives and friends of De los Santos, who is also known as Ahmed Islam Santos.

"I am not a rebel nor a terrorist, and I have no idea whatsoever as to the contents of the (extrajudicial confession). I am actually a nursing student who just happened to be in the... compound when authorities rounded us up, "imprisoned us," Alimudin said in a manifestation filed with the DOJ yesterday.

Alimudin accused State Prosecutor Romeo S. Senson of "forcibly" making him sign a statement on Oct. 28, 2005, owning up to the bombing of SuperFerry 14 on Manila Bay,.

He said he was not allowed to read his supposed confession, nor was he provided with a lawyer of his choice. *Armand N. Nocum*



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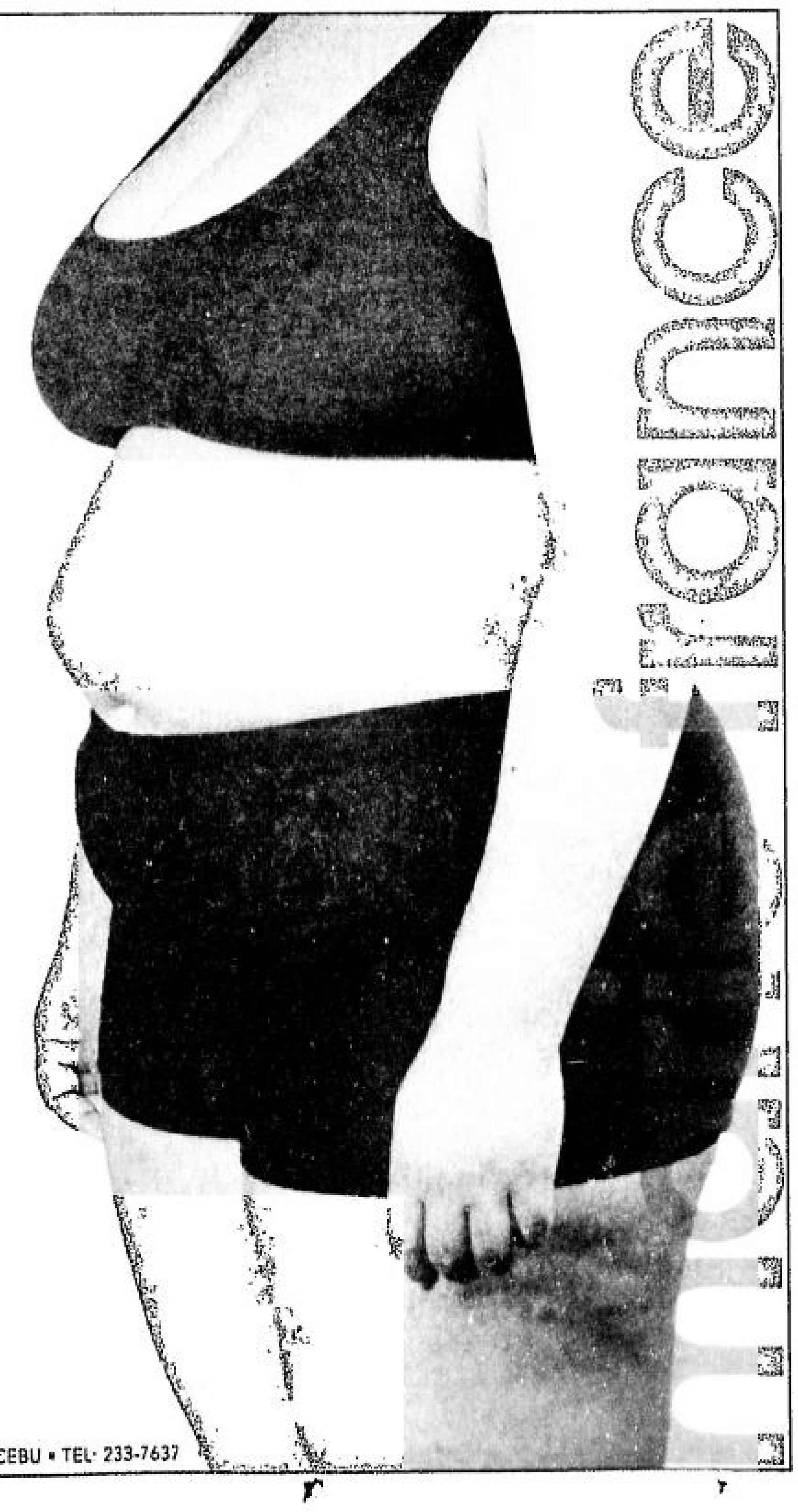

Students cope with old woes in school opening

From page A1

were excesses based on a double-shift.

Some 17.8 million students this year enrolled in government-run elementary and high schools, up 5 percent over last year, according to the education department. About 2.2 million will go to private schools, most of which start next week.

Education Officer in Charge Fe Hidalgo said the relocation of informal settlers in the metropolis, increase in population and exodus of students from private to public schools caused the shift in classroom shortage.

Problem regions

Hidalgo identified the problematic regions as Metro Manila, Region 4-A or Mimaropa, Central Visayas, Davao and Soccsksargen.

Hidalgo said the Ramon Magsaysay High School in Cubao, Quezon City lacked around 2,000 students based on its yearly enrollment of 7,000.

"The problem there is we are worried where the 2,000 students enrolled because that is where additional classrooms are needed now," she said.

At the school's counterpart on España Boulevard in Manila, Hidalgo found no classroom shortage with its 6,800 students on a 1:100 double-shift policy.

But at the Batasan Hills National High School in Quezon City, known to be one of the most crowded schools in the country with 7,204 students, the shortage was evident with class sizes exceeding 50 students per class.

Saying development should "reach the great masses of our people," Speaker Jose de Venecia yesterday proposed to China to help reduce the perennial classroom shortage in the Philippines by building 100,000 new schoolhouses nationwide.

Resourceful

Residents of Laoag City in Ilocos Norte relied on their resources to help address the classroom shortage.

Last week, parents, teachers and community volunteers helped in the repair and maintenance work of classrooms and school buildings under the DepEd's Brigada Eskuwela program.

The DepEd said only two schools in Laoag reported a classroom shortage.

Cecilia Aribuabo, city schools division superintendent, said 22 classrooms were needed at the Ilocos Norte National High School and at the Gabaldon Elementary School both located in the capital city.

"Construction (for the classrooms) is on going for (INNHS) but we still need funds for the age-old Gabaldon school building," she said, noting that one classroom costs P400,000.

She said only the Buttong Elemetary School reported a teachers' shortage due to the increase in the number of enrollees there.

The DepEd says it needs to hire more than 10,000 new teachers.

Halls and walkways

At the Solano National High School in Solano, Nueva Vizcaya, multipurpose halls and walkways were being used to hold classes, as the school's 31 classrooms could no longer accommodate its more than 2,100 enrollees this year.

In Dagupan City in Pangasinan, the Special Science High School, which opened this year, lured students mostly from private schools, according to Socorro Ramos, officer in charge of the office of the city superintendent.

Ramos said many private schools students have transferred to the government schools because of high cost of tuition and other school fees.

The collection of school fees in public schools was the No. 1 complaint received by the DepEd's Action Center in Pasig City yesterday.

Hidalgo said that in most cases, the fees being collected from the students and their parents were those agreed upon by the Parent-Teachers-Community Associations (PTCAs) for school projects.

However, Hidalgo said the payment of any fees should not be used as a requirement for enrollment. She also pointed out that PTCA officers should be in charge of collecting any fees and not the teachers.

"We recognize the PTCAs but even if they want to help the schools the fees should not be collected during the enrollment period and it should only be on voluntary basis," she added.

Protest rally

Students and parents of the Taguig National High School in Maharlika Village, Taguig City, held a rally outside the campus to protest the collection of fees by its principal, Dr. Eleonor Abisado, from students wanting to enroll.

The rally led to the suspension of classes at the high school.

Teresita Domalanta, DepEd National Capital Region director, said she would conduct a dialogue with school officials so that classes would start today.

Hidalgo noted that many school officials continued to defy the department's order against the collection of fees or were unaware the order existed.

Hiyas Laya Garduce, chair of the League of Filipino Students' high school chapter, said the DepEd's regulation was toothless because many public schools were still charging exorbitant fees during enrollment.

Garduce complained about the excessive Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) fee that is being collected in some schools.

She said some PTA fees went as high as P600, as in the case of Roces High school. Other schools charging excessive PTA fees were the University of the Philippines Integrated School, P400; Balara High School, P280; Camp Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo High School, P155; and the Quirino High School, P200.

More education funds

Dozens of public school teachers also held a rally to ask government to allocate more funds for education.

"We're marching in the streets on the first day of the new school year to call attention to the Arroyo government's failure to address the worsening problems of the educational system," said Alliance of Concerned Teachers chair Antonio Tinio.

"Under President Macapagal-Arroyo's watch, more children are out of school, teacher and classroom shortages have worsened, teachers' salaries have remained stagnant while their workloads have increased, and student achievement levels have plummeted," he said.

At the the rally at the Liwasang Bonifacio in Manila, the teachers called on Malacañang and Congress to immediately provide more funds to address the shortage of classrooms and teachers.

"Malacañang can draw on its discretionary funds to augment the meager P2 billion allocation for classroom construction," said Tess Busadre, president of the Quezon City Public School Teachers' Association.

Noting that the Senate slashed at least P64 billion in alleged pork barrel funds for the Office of the President from the proposed 2006 national budget, Busadre urged the bicameral conference committee to realign some of those funds to education.

The teachers also called on Congress to act on proposed legislation for a salary increase for teachers and other government employees.

Before the rally, the teachers gathered at the Philippine Normal University to form the Teachers and Employees Against Arroyo's Charter Change (TEACH). The launching was attended by former Vice President Teofisto Guingona.

Tuition increases

In Iloilo City, around 30 protesters led by Anakbayan, LFS and the National Union of Students of the Philippines picketed the regional office of the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd) to decry its "failure" to stop tuition increases.

Several protesters painted their bodies with slogans, condemning the CHEd for allowing the increase despite the economic hardships of parents and for the "worsening commercialization" of education.

"This is only the start of protest actions. We will hold bigger protests because of this continued assault on the youth's right to education," said NUSP-Iloilo coordinator Riza Joy Mapa.

Mapa said the yearly increase in school fees have driven thousands of students to drop out.

But Freddie Maningo, tuition coordinator of the CHEd regional office, said the commission had cushioned the impact of the increase on the students and their families.

"We did our share and convinced the school administrators to lower their increase," said Maningo.

Thirty-three of the 72 private schools in Western Visayas increased their rates this school year.

But Maningo said 29 of these schools did not go beyond the CHEd-imposed limit of 7.6 percent.

The commission earlier issued Memorandum No. 14 pegging the maximum increase in tuition to the national inflation rate of 7.6 percent.

Eastern Visayas

In Eastern Visayas, the opening of classes was marred not by a protest rally but by the usual problem of shortage of teachers and classrooms.

Aside from the needed 288 teachers—264 in high school and 24 in the elementary—the DepEd also needed more than 1,000 new classrooms to accommodate the projected 910,731 students in the region.

Belen Hipe, DepEd chief of the planning division, said 1,004 new classrooms were needed for the projected 245,316 high school students. *With reports from Tonette Orejas and Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk; Cristina Arzadon, Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Melvin Gascon and Villamor Visaya, PDI Northern Luzon Bueráu; Nestor P. Burgos Jr., Joey A. Gabieta and Jhunnex Napallacan PDI Visayas Bureau; and Michael Lim Ubac in Manila*

Teachers taught: Say it right

From page A1

difference. In 2004, a long-standing offer to write a language textbook finally materialized.

The result of her efforts? Two activity books for Grade 5 and Grade 6 pupils are now being used in more than 30 private schools in the country. A third one for the kindergarten level, titled "Read and Play with Words," came out in April.

Start early

Bangaoil said the books were her small contribution to the growing library of local English readers.

Like many of her peers, Bangaoil had looked for ways to maintain the vaunted Filipino advantage in written and spoken English. This task, she said, required not only the right books but also the right teachers.

"It's something that should start early in school," Bangaoil said. "When a student gets to college or high school, he would have imbibed errors that are difficult to unlearn. He would have gotten used to saying things incorrectly so when he is corrected, he would find the correct way funny or worse—wrong."

Sometimes, the books were good. The problem, however, lay with the teachers or the teaching methods, she said, citing mistakes in teaching, like in the area of pronunciation.

She tried to help teachers on this particular lesson by providing her own CD recording of pronunciations.

Teachers could just play the CD during class in case they lacked the confidence to pronounce the words themselves, she said.

Teachers first

"Teaching teachers to become better teachers" has been a personal advocacy for Bangaoil since she hooked up with the Department of Education's Mentor Program two years ago.

The program has brought her around the country, helping mostly public school teachers get the hang of the English language, whether they teach the subject or any other discipline.

From May 2004 to October 2005, she handled a series of language courses as a volunteer trainer to more than 700 teachers of English, Math and Science. These teachers, in turn, "cascaded" the lessons to their schools all over the country.

Bangaoil said the program was partly supported by call center giant Convergys which provided the venues, computers and food for the participants. She designed the program and provided the materials.

"My belief is that if you train 50 students, you'll just end up teaching 50 people," she said.

"But if you start with the teachers, they'll end up transferring knowledge to a multitude."

Funny accents

Bangaoil said the training sessions with DepEd were driven by her conviction that "every teacher should be a language teacher." That meant never taking language for granted even if one taught Science.

Sometimes, the English teacher would give the correct pronunciation of mathematics, but the Mathematics teacher would pronounce the word in a thick, erroneous accent, she said.

"Students end up being confused," Bangaoil said. "English teachers encourage students to speak English but other teachers speak Taglish or the vernacular in class."

Without harmony in instruction and methodology, she said students were bound to regard language as a subject matter that's supposed to be forgotten right after English class.

Strategies

Bangaoil is also a professor of Behavioral Science at the University of Santo Tomas. She has given training sessions that cover leadership, team-building, presentation and facilitation skills. She also works as a program manager for training at a call center in Eastwood City.

Bangaoil said her books combined the strategies she employed in training adults and children.

Interaction, she stressed, was key. Students should also be allowed to explore, find and analyze things for themselves and eventually develop critical thinking—even as early as kindergarten.

"I want a book that doesn't just say 'a' as in 'apple' or 'a' as in 'airplane,'" she wrote in the preface of "Read and Play with Words," her kinder level book.

"I want pupils who will be using this book to recognize the alphabet and the sound of each of the letters, and not only rely on pictures."

Saying her piece

In the book, Bangaoil finally got to say her piece, writing that the "letter 'a' sounds like 'ey,' like the way you say 'a' when you sing or say the alphabet."

She said lessons like these were "coauthored" by her daughter who had had to unlearn some things from school.

She narrated one incident when Karen came home from school pronouncing the letter "z" as "zey," seemingly forgetting the right phonology her mother had taught her.

The next day, Bangaoil went to the principal who told her: "Yes, it's 'zey.'"

She promptly referred the principal to a dictionary and left, realizing that "the country still had a long way to go to put English education back on track."

LEGAZPI CITY PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS AND EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION, INC.

(LECIPSTEA, INC)

Legazpi City

RESOLUTION NO. 02-2006

RESOLUTION REITERATING THE LECIPSTEA'S STAND IN CONDEMNING THE ISSUES REGARDING THE "IRREGULARITIES" ALLEGEDLY COMMITTED BY THE BOARD OF ELECTION INSPECTORS (BEIs) OF LEGAZPI CITY DIVISION DURING THE MAY 2004 ELECTIONS

WHEREAS, the Division of Legazpi City's teachers' role as Board of Elections Inspectors (BEIs) during the May, 2004 Mayoral Election in Legazpi City had been put to a big doubt with the protest made by the losing candidate and the eventual recount conducted by COMELEC Manila;

WHEREAS, the LECIPSTEA, the citywide organization of public school teachers and employees in Legazpi City had passed ***A RESOLUTION CONDEMNING THE ISSUES REGARDING THE" IRREGULARITIES" ALLEGEDLY COMMITTED BY THE BOARD OF ELECTION INSPECTORS (BEIs) OF LEGAZPI CITY DIVISION DURING THE MAY 2004 ELECTIONS*** (Resolution No. 04-2005), copies of which were furnished the COMELEC, Manila; the Schools Division Superintendent of Legazpi City; the office of the Regional Director, DepEd Region V, the Legazpi City Mayor's Office; the DepEd Central Office; and the Philippine Daily Inquirer, for information, publication and action;

WHEREAS, after COMELEC hearings conducted in Manila, for almost a year now some doubts are still cast on the honesty and integrity of the teachers of Legazpi City;

WHEREAS, we the teachers - the BEIs assigned in last May Elections in Legazpi City cannot just accept results which are contrary to what we have sworn to - the true and honest results of the May, 2004 Elections in Legazpi City mayoralty race, honestly and painstakingly counted by the BEI's in the presence of all the watchers of all parties together with the NAMFREL and PPCR V volunteers, and duly attested to by all of them, copies of these returns of which are still with the teachers;

WHEREAS, if we may recount, in the whole city, media - radio, TV and print, was all there to watch the whole proceeding and there was no single protest ever aired or written about as regards any alleged cheating done for or against any candidates, whether during the election day itself, or in the days that followed;

WHEREAS, some seven months after the peaceful May elections, here comes a protest on the election results which to us teachers is outright baseless considering the results we prepared and submitted as members of the BEIs, duly attested to by all watchers of all candidates;

BE IT RESOLVED THEREFORE , AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the teachers of Legazpi City strongly reiterate our stand in condemning the issues on the "irregularities" allegedly committed by the Board of Election Inspectors (BEIs) of Legazpi City Division during the May 2004 Election;

RESOLVED FURTHER, that copies of this resolution be furnished the office of the President of the Philippines, COMELEC Office (Local, Regional and National), DepEd (City, Regional and National), office of the City Mayor of Legazpi, for information, dissemination and action.

WE HEREBY CERTIFY, to the correctness of the foregoing resolution duly adopted by the members of the LECIPSTEA Board during its Special Meeting held on 18th of January 2006.

Unanimously Approved.

FE D. DOLOT
President

CESAR C. REGIDOR
Vice-President

AILEEN J. TOLEDO
Secretary

HELEN D. SERRANO
Treasurer

LOURDES A. ARIOLA
MAS Treasurer

DULCE G. POBRE
Board Member

CARMEN J. BELDAD
Board Member

LUIS E. ABION
Auditor

DANTE A. CARRETERO
Business Manager

EDEN S. JULIO
Board Member

ROMEO A. ESPINAS
Board Member

FLORENTINA B. MOLET
Board Member

RAMON [illegible]AGUNO III
Business Manager

MA[illegible]Y A. FINAT
PIO

JENEATH LL. BACASON
Board Member

MARIBELLE R. LITA
Board Member

Corrections

IN THE JUNE 3 ISSUE, a caption of a front-page photo that accompanied the banner story—"Nicole relives ordeal"—misstated that among those shown shielding the 22-year-old alleged rape victim from the press were members of Gabriela, a militant women's group. The people shielding Nicole in the photo were her supporters—not members of Gabriela.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Lorna Kalaw Tirol, readers' advocate, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.com. ph or fax Nos. 897-47-93/94, Attn: Readers Advocate. Her phone number is 897-8808 Local 342.

RP, China forge greater cooperation pact

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE PHILIPPINES AND CHINA yesterday sealed a deal that promises greater cooperation between both countries in the fields of mining, agriculture and fisheries, tourism and infrastructure.

The agreement was signed by Trade and Industry Secretary Peter B. Favila and Chinese Minister of Commerce Bo Xilai, and was witnessed by President Macapagal-Arroyo, former President Fidel V. Ramos, who chairs the Chian-based Boao Forum, Chinese Ambassador Li Jinjun and Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri.

The two-day Philippines-China Economic Forum where the memorandum of understanding was signed will serve as the blueprint for economic cooperation between the two nations for the next 10 years, officials said.

The centerpiece of the forum are talks toward the signing of an agreement with the Chinese government for a loan to fund the construction of the proposed SouthRail project, similar to the controversial NorthRail project.

The deal is valued at $700 million although bilateral negotiations are still ongoing. A ranking government official familiar with the project, who requested anonymity, said the deal was being scrutinized by the National Economic and Development Authority.

In her speech before an estimated 300 Chinese delegates, President Arroyo called on them to invest more in the country.

She also invited Chinese businessmen to take a closer look at the local mining industry which is experiencing a resurgence after the Supreme Court upheld the Mining Act in 2004.

"We have reserves worth $1 trillion, and we have one of the largest deposits of gold, copper and nickel," she said.

With an annual growth rate of almost 10 percent, the Chinese economy is now the world's largest buyer of commodities and precious metals, mainly to feed its booming manufacturing base.

"We want to forge a long-term strategic partnership in mining," Ms Arroyo said.

Several Chinese firms are presently exploring business prospects in the mining sector although the most attractive is the shuttered Nonoc nickel mines in Surigao del Norte which is being hampered by disagreements over its remaining liabilities.

President Arroyo also encouraged the Chinese delegates to explore the Philippines more, noting that the number of Chinese tourists to the country last year grew three times over 2004 figures.

She also asked them to invest in agriculture which is a traditional Chinese economic strength.

"We are developing two million hectares of land for agribusiness," President Arroyo said. "We invite you to invest in them."

The forum, which ends today, is sponsored by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Manila, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc. and the Trade Development Bureau of the People's Republic of China.

About 50 officials from various Chinese government agencies like their tourism, foreign affairs and agriculture ministries, as well as officials from the provinces of Guangdong, Guangxi, Jiangxi, Fujian and Shandong attended the event.

Manila
Jun
Org

PRESIDENT ARROYO (center), with Chinese Ambassador to Manila Li Jinjun (left, standing) and former President Fidel Ramos (right, standing), witnesses the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding establishing the Philippines-China Economic Partnership by Chinese Minister of Commerce Bo Xilai (left, seated) and Trade Secretary Peter Favila. LYN RILLON

RP, Poland plan arms factory

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE PHILIPPINES AND POLAND are exploring the possibility of setting up a joint venture to manufacture small firearms and ammunition in the Philippines as part of a defense cooperation agreement being worked out between Manila and Warsaw, the two countries' top defense officials announced yesterday.

The proposed arms plant and a Polish offer of a $140-million loan to the Philippines for the purchase of military equipment were among the topics discussed by Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz and Polish Defense Minister Radoslaw Sikorski and other officials at a meeting in Camp Aguinaldo.

Sikorski is the first Polish defense chief to visit the Philippines since the two countries Established diplomatic relations in 1973. His visit follows up a visit by Polish Prime Minister Marek Belka in July 2005.

"We intend to enter into a defense cooperation agreement and explore many areas such as exchange of visits, exchange of information, exchange of technology," Cruz said at a joint news conference with Sikorski. "Maybe in the future we can evolve a joint venture or cooperation on manufacturing small arms and ammunition in the country, provided there is a market and it is viable and feasible."

Sikorski said his country was not interested in simply selling things to the Philippines. "We would like to invest here... which I think only makes sense because you want your ammunition from a partner that is going to be a reliable supplier even in crisis," he said.

Firearms manufacturers from both countries were already discussing details of the proposed joint venture, the two officials said.

Among the equipment Poland proposes to provide the Philippines under the credit line extended by Sikorski are helicopters which he said have been tried and tested in Iraq and Venezuela. *With a report from AP*

More Pinoys fleeing Dili arrive

By Nikko Dizon

FILIPINOS ARE SO WELL REgarded in strife-torn East Timor that a Philippine flag serves as an amulet to ward off attacks, according to an official of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

"Embassy officials and the Filipinos there put on display the Philippine flag on their vehicles, in their homes, at the embassy to keep gangs from attacking them," Esteban Conejos Jr., undersecretary for migrant workers affairs, told reporters yesterday.

"Apparently, Filipinos are regarded well in East Timor. We have a good relationship with the East Timorese," Conejos added.

Conejos and Marianito Roque, administrator of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, headed a group of government officials who welcomed home the second batch of Filipino who chose to return to the Philippines because of the conflict raging in the world's youngest country.

The batch of 24 Filipinos, including a 4-year-old girl, arrived at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City at 5:15 p.m. on board a Philippine Air Force C-130 cargo plane.

The plane's crew also brought along a sealed casket, after being informed that a dead Filipino child was among those to be repatriated.

"We were told that it was for the cadaver of a child. But when we arrived in (East Timor capital) Dili, there was no dead body," said Maj. Dante Lito Benitez, one of the two pilots of the plane.

The evacuees brought along with them nearly everything they could, from a portable keyboard and packed instant noodles to a huge stuffed toy.

Mario Mina, 34, hired as a supervisor, told the INQUIRER that he should have been among the first batch of 65 Filipino evacuees who arrived in Manila on May 28 if not for having been stuck at his company's job site outside Dili.

Susana Medina, 43, said she was forced to leave Dili despite having a small yet thriving business there because her young daughter, Eastimotea had been traumatized by the violence.

"She would shout in her sleep, 'I'm scared!' or 'Mommy, don't leave me!' " Medina said.

She said that Manuel Gusmao, brother of East Timor President Xanana Gusmao, helped her family escape after ethnic gang members threatened to burn, and later actually torched, the house they rented.

Manuel Gusmao was the employer of her husband, a Filipino engineer, Medina said.

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Despite problems, teachers still committed to jobs

By Luige A. del Puerto

TEACHERS FELT THE EXCITEMENT in the air days before the public schools opened yesterday.

"You're very excited about what kind of students you'll have and what section you'll get," said Shierly Guieb, a 51-year-old science teacher.

Guieb heads the science department at Concepcion High School in Marikina City. The school had about 2,000 students last year, and since enrolment has been steadily increasing, teachers expect more students this year.

The excitement has been fueled by weeks of preparations because even if there are no students to teach during summer, a teacher's work is never done.

During the school break, they must attend a series of seminars to upgrade their skills or prepare them for the introduction of new subjects. The week before classes open, inter-departmental meetings are set, changes in the curriculum discussed and lesson plans updated.

"Our topic last week focused on the effectiveness of a teacher. We focused on the commitment of a teacher," she said.

Of course, there are also floors to be scrubbed, tables to be dusted, and visual aids to be prepared.

The science department, for one, began teaching nuclear physics about two years ago.

"It's not very in-depth, but at least when students go to college they are not completely ignorant of it," said Guieb, who herself attended a workshop at the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute to prepare for the new subject.

Love of teaching

Many are into teaching for the love of it. A teacher's pay—about P9,900 a month—hardly inspires anyone to wake up before morning breaks, work throughout the day, and go home when the sun has set.

Guieb is fortunate. She is not the only breadwinner of the family; her husband, a seaman, earns enough for his wife and four children.

But she knows coworkers who rely solely on their salaries to survive, and that is why they have to augment it.

'Loan-don'

In her school, there are many who are "always in Loan-don," Guieb said with a warm laugh.

That is, they are always taking out loans. It is a testament to their strength of character that they can still laugh at their less-than-ideal situation.

Teachers can also be the most resourceful of people. There is an "Avon lady" or even a "Sarah Lee lady" at school. A handful are "load ladies," who sell electronic credits for mobile phones.

Students are sources of a teacher's joys and pains.

It tears a teacher's heart apart when a student drops out of school to look for work to support his or her family, and Concepcion High's statistics say it all. During the first year, each class can have as many as 70 students and as many as 10 sections. By the fourth year, only about 65 students per class and seven sections remain.

In an article last year, the INQUIRER quoted data from the Center for Asia-Pacific Studies saying that out of every 10 Filipino schoolchildren enrolled every year, fewer than seven will graduate from grade school. Only about four will finish high school and only one will manage to earn a college degree.

Many quit

The mortality rate is quite high, Guieb said. "Many quit for many reasons. But many do so because they have to work."

"I have a student who was absent for two weeks. I make it a habit to visit my students at home when they are absent for a week or two. I visited his home but they were not around. Days later, her mother came to school to tell me that her son was quitting. Her husband had fallen ill, and her son had to go with his uncle to work at a construction site," she said.

What can one do in such a situation?

Very little or none at all, she said, adding that if only she could send them all to school, she would.

Yet when the joys come, they renew a teacher's commitment to his or her students.

Guieb once trained a student in Physics and he won the division-level quiz bee. "He is now a scholar in Ateneo, and I was so happy to hear about it," she said.

Little joys

These little joys also come in the form of an invitation to become a godmother to a child or a greeting in one's birthday.

Like other public schools, Concepcion High has to deal with problems some of which money can solve like the lack of classrooms, chairs and teachers.

The school has about 45 regular teachers and 16 contractual ones. Its science department has 10 teachers, yet not all of them are science education majors.

As department chair, Guieb should ideally handle only two classes and no advisory class. But because of the lack of teachers, she handled three sections with an advisory class last school year.

In 2005, Education Officer in Charge Fe Hidalgo said more than half of the country's 458,282 public school teachers have had, in fact, little or no training in Science, Math and English. Lack of mastery was even more acute in Math and Science.

Only 25 percent of Math and Science teachers actually trained in their respective areas of instruction, Hidalgo said, adding that this has affected the learning skills of students.

Ideally, a teacher should handle only up to 50 students or less. But just to demonstrate the extent of the problem, Guieb handled a class of 90 students in the late 1990s, her first crack at teaching in a public school. (Conditions have since improved, she said.)

Classes under the tree

Concepcion High's woes are not unique. To make full use of a classroom, an extra row of chairs is lined up on the wall. Students, at times, also hold classes in corridors, under the shade of trees, or on stairways.

But there are some problems that money cannot solve, like seeing the quality of students drop year after year, and the time allotted for Science subjects cut to just one hour due to lack of teachers and rooms. (It used to be 1:20 hours).

"Before, when I gave an activity, it was a sort of a discovery. You let them do it and allow them to find out (the answer)," she said. "But (now) I have to tell them that this is what they are going to find out. I have to do that because otherwise, it takes time."

Guieb has had fourth year students who knew the answers but quickly withdrew their raised arms when told to speak in English.

She has had students who she had to practice the multiplication table with.

In short, she has had students who cannot communicate and cannot do math, a particularly troubling situation when one is teaching Physics, where lessons are taught in English and calculations are necessary.

"It takes a lot of patience, but I love teaching and I really want students to learn," she said.

Governess, cum laude

Guieb very well knows the value of education. A bright student, she had dropped out of high school to become a governess in Hong Kong to help support her family. She pursued high school when she came back and graduated when she was in her 20s. Then the children came and began growing up and, for a while, the family was her whole world.

But the graduation of a maid whom she had sent to a midwifery school "awoke" her interest in schooling. At 36, she majored in education at a local college and finished at 40 a cum laude, juggling family time and school assignments in four years.

She is now taking up her doctoral degree at the University of Sto. Tomas.

This year, Guieb wants to introduce a "new" teaching method. It's new because it has not been tried in her class before. She wants to use the computer, particularly PowerPoint, as an aide when lecturing, just like they do in her postgraduate classes.

She has one problem. She has volunteered to buy her own laptop computer, but the school does not have a working projector.

It's one of those problems that money can solve. Unfortunately, her school like many public schools, may not have enough funds for it.

Decline in quality hobbles job creation program

From page A1

are the schools," Abad says.

There's no lack of creative strategies to deal with the massive problems in the country's education system.

There are programs to make "every child a reader" by Grade 3 and to set up "library hubs."

Changes in management and hiring practices are being introduced. These include requiring English proficiency in teacher licensure and computer literacy, providing teaching slots for top graduates, and offering in- and pre-service training.

It also means pay increases for teachers. Most of them feel "undercompensated." They are looking at possibilities in greener pastures abroad, where good salaries await them.

"I know a lot of teachers who have decided or are planning to go abroad, to the United States and the Middle East," says Jochebed Acad, 28, an English teacher.

Tightening curriculum

Acad says he was so idealistic in the beginning. "I wanted to be part of a change (for the better). But when you become part of the system, things change."

Other measures include practicum and the tightening of the elementary and high school curriculum.

There's an initiative to improve student-computer ratios and Internet connectivity.

In addition, efforts are under way to reestablish Science and Math clubs and fairs, adopt multiyear budget ceilings, conduct Olympics-style preparation for tests on the TIMSS (Trends in Math and Science Survey) and better use of Special Education Funds.

Health factor

The correlation between health and learning is also being addressed.

A paper presented by former Education Undersecretary Juan Miguel Luz says 30 percent of all pupils aged 6 to 12 years are "underweight and underheight."

This condition is responsible for 25 percent of school dropouts before completion of Grade 4 and 35 percent before the end of Grade 6.

The study also says that 65 percent of pupils aged 6 to 12 are iodine-deficient, while one out in every three suffers from iron deficiency anemia.

Dental caries affect 87 percent of the children. No wonder, 32 percent of absenteeism in Grade 1 is due to mouth-related pain.

Addressing health problems, Luz says, requires a multi-agency effort and some 20,000 doctors and nurses.

Food assistance

The Department of Social Welfare and Development launched a food assistance program in 2004 as a response to hunger among students. The initial beneficiaries were Grades 1 and 2 students and their families in Metro Manila, Cavite, Bulacan and Rizal. It was discontinued after a few months.

On the problem of universal access, in 2000, 4,569 barangays, or 10 percent of the total, were without elementary schools. This number had been reduced to 118 as of 2004.

The Department of Education launched the Brigada Eskwela (School Brigade) in May 2003 to mobilize community support for the rehabilitation and maintenance of schools.

More importantly, it sought to enlist the participation of parents and local community leaders in encouraging children to learn.

The number of participating schools increased from 13,660 in 2003 to 16,089 in 2004. A total of 278,170 parent-volunteers joined the program in May 2004.

Distance learning

To reach remote communities, there's the Strong Republic Schools (SRS)-Distance Learning Program launched in 2003, the DepEd says. This utilizes television, radio and cable networks initially in 500 barangays.

The department implemented a restructured Basic Education Curriculum in 2002-2003. It aims to concentrate on key subjects—English, Mathematics, Science and Filipino, and improve the country's competitiveness.

Kindergarten

Because the old grading system was seen as not reflective of actual work, a new one was put in place. It gives accent on performance and includes diagnostic tests to determine competency.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has declared that kindergarten should now be part of the school ladder. This is now being organized.

The education department is also introducing the so-called High School Bridge Program designed to prepare students for secondary school. It focuses on English, Science and Math.

Luz, in fact, proposes two additional years in high school, pointing out that this is the case in the developed world.

Republic Act No. 9155, or the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, provides the framework for the decentralization of management of basic education.

School heads are now authorized to initiate and engage in educational innovations that will improve actual delivery of basic education to children based on their own needs, resources and contexts.

Workshops are being held to promote school-based management.

Communities are being encouraged to explore ways of addressing fundamental problems in areas torn by armed conflicts and extreme poverty or requiring a peculiar indigenous response.

Efforts responsive to needs

"What my predecessors have done are really very responsive to the kind of need that we have," says DepEd Officer in Charge Fe Hidalgo.

"What we'd like to do now is, if possible, to look at the multiyear budget horizon. When I say multiyear, in the next five years," says Hidalgo, who rose from being a school teacher in Batanes to become an education manager.

Hidalgo says the "education-for-all" scenario sets in place the department's targets. "This year, it's between the catch-up and the population-driven budget."

Unfortunately, education for all isn't exactly what the country needs.

It is more than that. Otherwise, only lip service is being paid to the so-called desire to achieve universal education—without giving it substance. *Alcuin Papa*

Notes on Page A1 graph:

* INCLUDES 340,231 ELEMENTARY PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS IN SY 2004-2005 AND 35,699 ELEMENTARY PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS IN SY2002-2003
** INCLUDES 123,074 HIGH SCHOOL PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS IN SY 2004-2005 AND 43,615 HIGH SCHOOL PRIVATE TEACHERS IN SY 2002-2003
*** AS OF SY 2003-2004
** *FROM SURVEY CONDUCTED FOR PRIVATE EDUCATION SERVICES AND SALARY GRADE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2001
SOURCES: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION-BASIC EDUCATION STATISTICS AS OF MARCH 2006 AND BUREAU OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS (JUNE 2004 OCCUPATIONAL WAGES SURVEY) AND COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION.
COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH

Teacher wants . . .

From page A1

In forbidding the hitting of children in school five years ago, Kenya joined most of the rest of the world, where physical force against the young is regarded as a cruel form of punishment.

But the ban—imposed after some schools took the practice too far, injuring, disabling and even killing some children—has yet to truly take hold.

Though no precise records are kept, children's advocates in Kenya report a steady stream of new cases. And many parents and teachers are pushing for a return to the days when students were legally kept in line with a switch.

Kaloki, a veteran teacher and father of three, has emerged as the leading spokesperson for those who want the cane restored.

Kaloki, who has filed a court case to restore corporal punishment in schools, wants regulated caning for, as he puts it, the good of the next generation.

Under his plan, only bamboo sticks would be allowed—to sting but without enough force to cause permanent injury. Only experienced disciplinarians would administer the blows, with witnesses to ensure restraint.

Government officials insist they will not consider a return to the days of corporal punishment.

But Veronica Nduta, 22, a recent college graduate who was caned as a child, said: "I think it would be a good idea if it were brought back. Now that it's not there, the youth have become a hardcore lot. As long as the teacher is not brutal, caning is a good way of instilling discipline."

The perception that young Kenyans are losing their way is heard frequently, and evidence of unruliness is ample.

Kenya's government recently eliminated the fees that were charged for students to attend primary school, which greatly increased enrollment and class sizes.

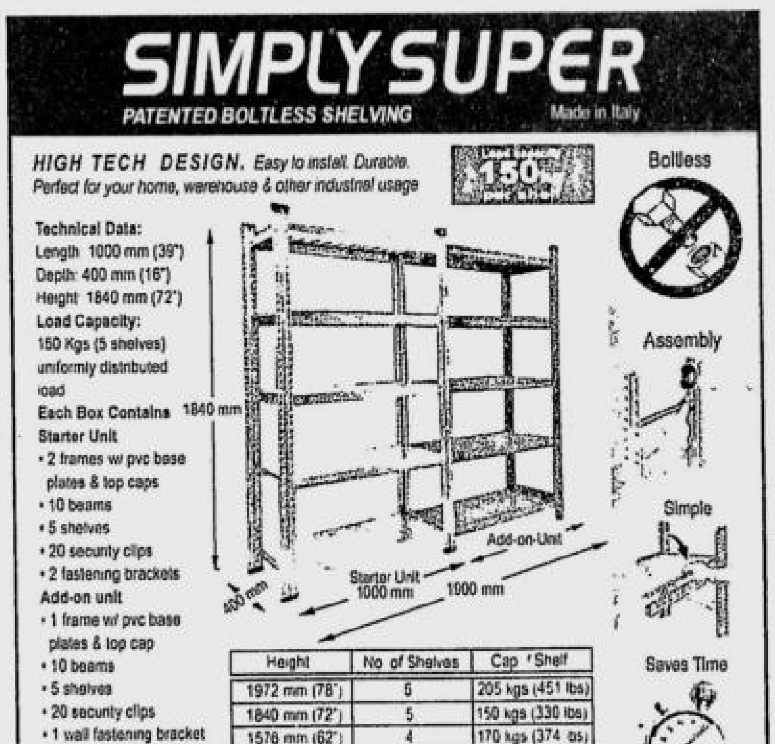
As a result, gamblers now attend classes. So do drug addicts and youths who fight and have sex, according to Kaloki.

Pupils, taking a cue from older, rowdier university students, have conducted walkouts to demand changes in school conditions. They have set classrooms afire or chased away teachers.

Shiphrah Gichaga, a counselor and mother of four, said Kenya banned caning without providing teachers with adequate skills for controlling their classrooms.

"The children had known the cane as the only weapon that was used in silencing them," Gichaga said. "Now it is no longer there."

New York Times News Service



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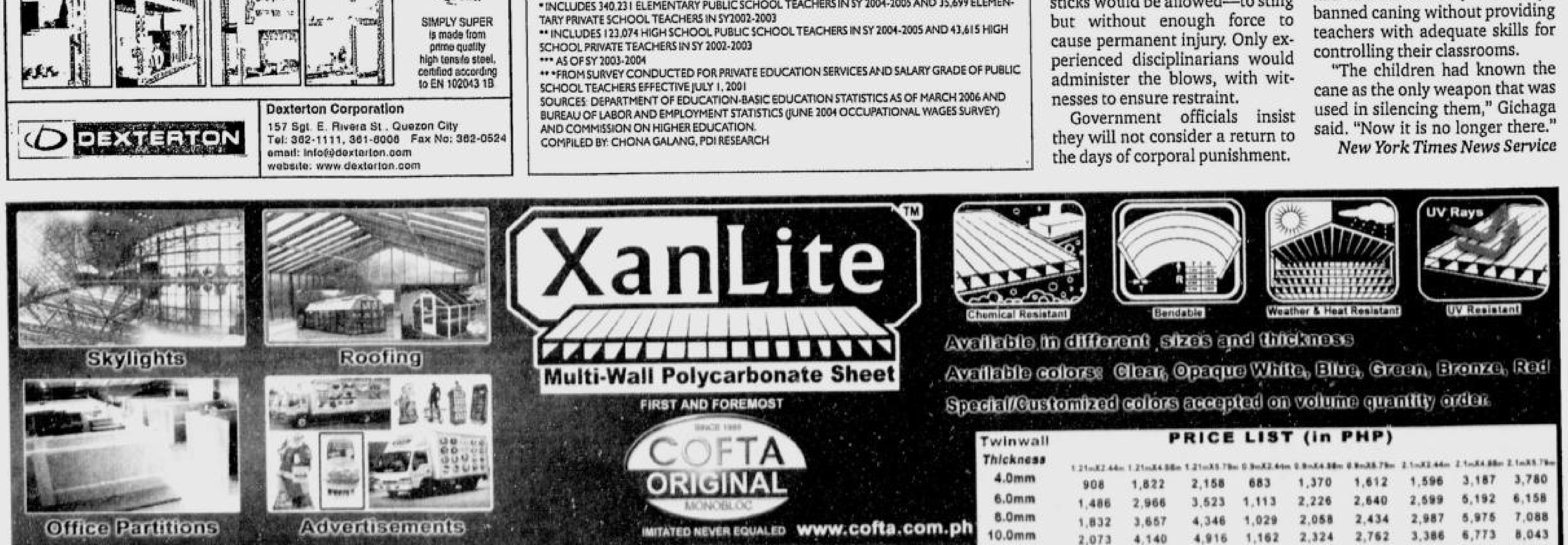

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8.0mm	1,832	3,657	4,346	1,029	2,058	2,434	2,987	5,975	7,088
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For lack of ₱1M, OFW recruiters suspended

By Jerome Aning

THE PHILIPPINE Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) has suspended 438 recruitment agencies after they each failed to deposit P1 million in an escrow account in accordance with new government regulations.

POEA Administrator Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz said agencies unable to make a deposit within a month would be shut down for good.

Recruiters' groups had asked for more time to comply with the new rule but Baldoz was adamant, saying they had four years to make the deposit.

Under the new rules, a recruitment agency should maintain a P1-million escrow account in a bank. The deposit is to cover any monetary claims the agencies' clients might make against them.

The POEA had earlier said some 750 of the country's 1,300 licensed recruitment agencies had failed to comply with the escrow order.

But industry sources said many of the recruiters rushed to beat the May 31 deadline to make the deposit in order to protect their businesses.

Baldoz said the escrow requirement was intended to improve the deployment of overseas Filipino workers "by trimming the number of recruitment agencies so that only the efficient and compliant ones remained."

She debunked claims the deployment of OFWs would suffer with the closure of such a big number of recruitment agencies, saying they would be replaced by new agencies.

"The new players in the recruitment industry could readily put up the required escrow deposit and this [would] show that they could protect and ensure the welfare of the workers they deploy abroad," she said.

Many agencies unable to make deposits said they were experiencing "hard times" because of high prices, the lower peso-dollar exchange rate, changing markets and deployment restrictions imposed by some countries like Japan.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas backed Baldoz, saying, "Remember, we're not exporting pineapples, papayas or microchips here—we're sending people and the lives of these people are important to us."

Indonesian hijack suspects expelled

THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION HAS DEported 11 Indonesians arrested for allegedly hijacking two tugboats in Indonesian waters and taking the vessels to the Philippines to be sold to unidentified buyers, officials said yesterday.

The Indonesians were expelled last Thursday, a day after the bureau's Board of Commissioners ordered their deportation. They departed through Davao where they were fetched by an Indonesian police aircraft, immigration officials said.

Jose Carandang said the bureau waived the P50,000 fine imposed on each of the Indonesians at the request of the Indonesian Embassy, which said the men were indigents.

The deportees, identified as Bayu Arden Mahardika, Muhamad Furqah, Achmad Jin Abdulmaji, Hariyanto, Hariono, Ricad Daniel Panjaitan, Bornok Ricardo, Suwandi Siagian, David Sarira, Bernard Labene and Oscar Dalegi, were also placed on the Bureau of Immigration's black list.

Nine of the Indonesians were arrested in Compostela Valley last month while the other two were collared in Cebu City by immigration agents and police tipped off to the hijackings by the Indonesian Embassy.

The Indonesians were described as crew members of the tugboats Martha Dini and TK Sentana V that left Sumatra for Kalimantan last month but which the crew allegedly diverted to the Philippines. *Leila B. Salaverria*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, June 6, 2006
9th Week in Ordinary Time
Norbet

1st Reading: 2 P 3:12-15, 17-18
Gospel: Mark 12:13-17

Jewish leaders sent to Jesus some Pharisees with members of Herod's party, with the purpose of trapping him in his own words. They came and said to Jesus, "Master, we know that you are true; you are not influenced by anyone, and your answers do not vary according to who is listening to you but you truly teach God's way. Tell us, is it against the Law to pay taxes to Caesar? Should we pay them or not?"

But Jesus saw through their trick and answered, "Why are you testing me? Bring me a silver coin and let me see it." They brought him one and Jesus asked, "Whose head is this, and whose name?" They answered, "Caesar's." Then Jesus said, "Return to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." And they were greatly astonished.

Commentary

We are to live in expectation: bringing the kingdom here on earth and leaving it to God for its coming in fullness. We await the justice of God and have much to do in the interim, beginning with the making of peace, and growing in grace and knowledge of God, and again, we do this together and this is what gives glory to God. We're not to get caught in games in the world. Everything belongs to God. His image is upon us and the only God we worship and obey is Jesus' God, revealed as the Trinity.

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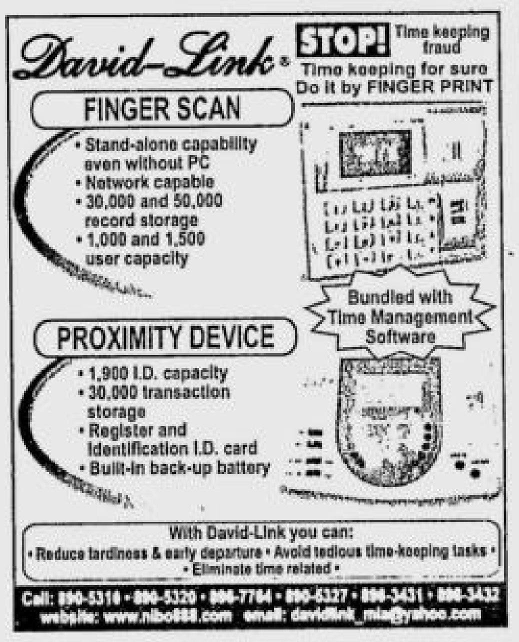
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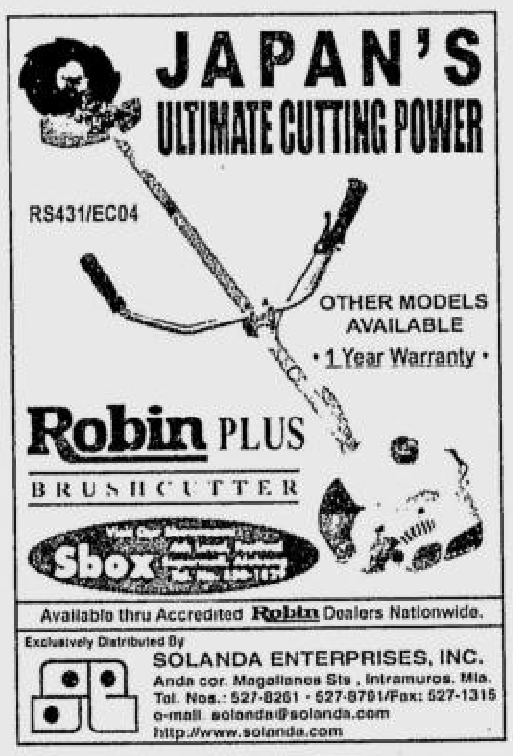
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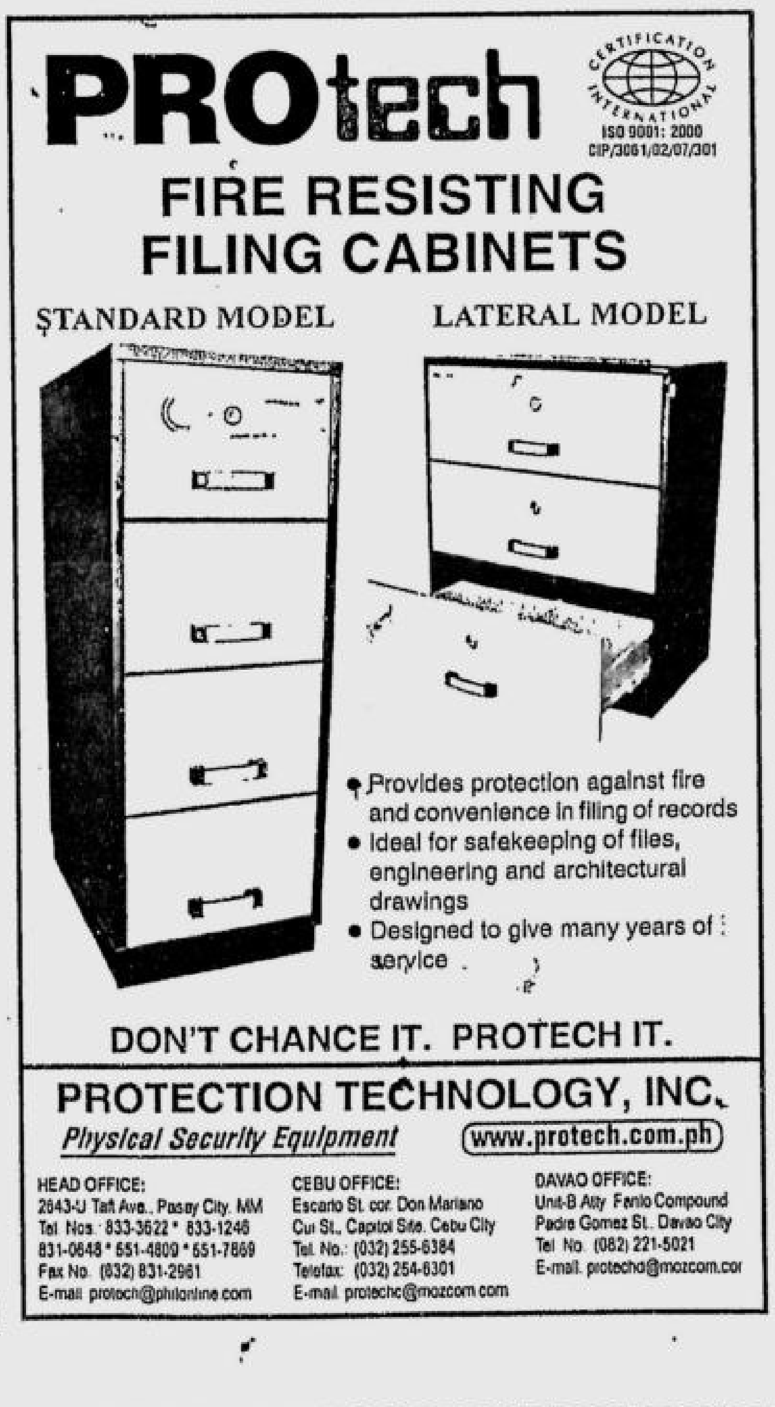
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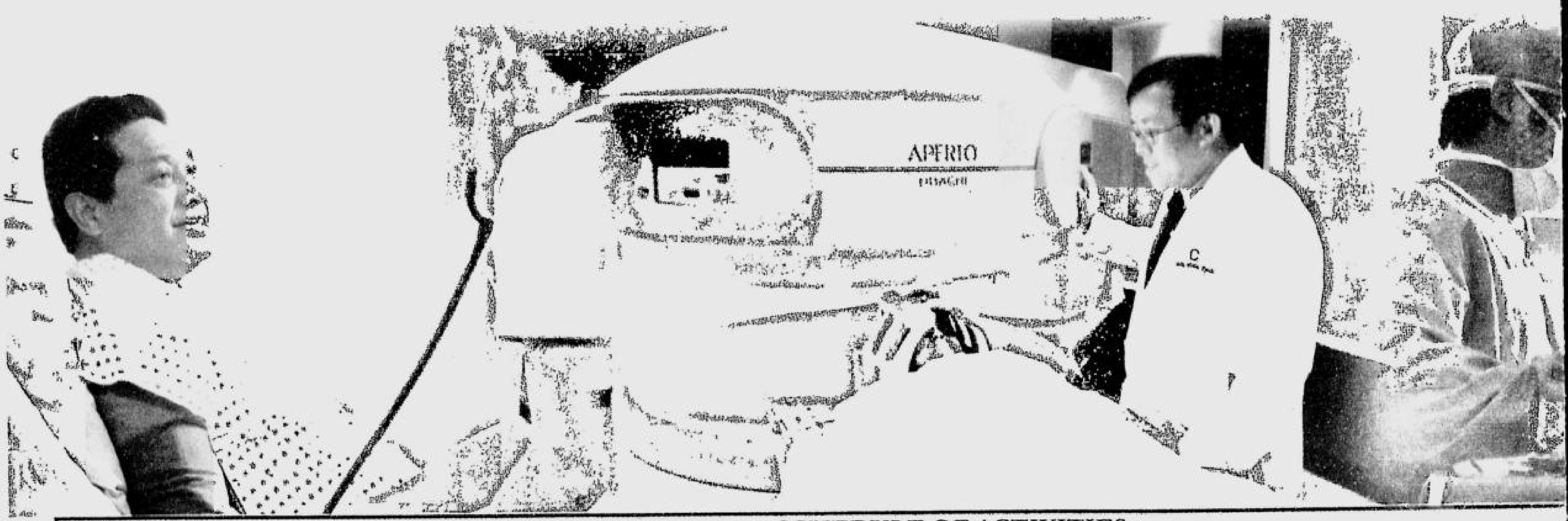

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

JUNE	DAY	TIME	ACTIVITY
1 - 30	Mon to Fri	1:00 - 4:00 pm	SAGIP MATA PROJECT CMC FOUNDATION Director's Office, UGF, CMC V
3, 10, 17, 24	Saturday	8:00 am - 12:00 nn	FREE CONSULTATION Out-Patient Department, CMC II
5	Monday	5:00 pm	ART EXHIBIT Lobby, CMC V
8	Thursday	1:00 - 4:00 pm	ARE YOU AGING GRACEFULLY? GYNECOLOGIC CONCERNS AGING GRACEFULLY...THROUGH SKIN REJUVENATION 12th Floor Auditorium, CMC V
13	Tuesday	9:00 am - 12:00 nn	ARE YOU A POTENTIAL RECIPIENT? KIDNEY TRANSPLANTATION: A REBIRTH 12th Floor Auditorium, CMC V
14	Wednesday	8:00 am - 5:00 pm	ARE YOUR CHILDREN "AGING PREMATURELY?" ADULT DISEASES IN THE YOUNG 12th Floor Auditorium, CMC V
15	Thursday	1:00 - 4:00 pm	ARE YOU A VICTIM OF THE "SILENT KILLER" RADICAL CHANGING CONCEPTS IN HYPERTENSION ARE YOU READY TO DONATE BLOOD? BLOOD - THE GIFT OF LIFE 12th Floor Auditorium, CMC V
16	Friday	6:00 pm	MEDICAL STAFF PARTY Annabel's Restaurant
20	Tuesday	11:00 am	36th ANNIVERSARY THANKSGIVING MASS 12th Floor Auditorium, CMC V
21	Wednesday	1:00 - 4:00 pm	ARE YOU PRACTICING MEDICO LEGAL PART 2 12th Floor Auditorium, CM
22	Thursday	9:00 - 11:00 am 1:00 - 4:00 pm	KIDNEY TRANSPLANT: ARE YOU LIVING THE SPORTS & RECREATION EBM OF KNEE INJURIE 12th Floor Auditorium, CM
23	Friday	4:00 - 8:30 pm	CMC JEWELS EMPLOYE Dish, ABS-CBN
23 - 24	Fri - Sat	7:30 am - 5:00 pm	CAPITOL CITIWIDE INC CLINICO PATHOLOGIC 12th Floor Auditorium, CM
25	Sunday	6:00 am - 12:00 nn	ONE FAMILY, ONE TEAM Amoranto Multi-Purpose H
27	Tuesday		KIDNEY TRANSPLANT:
28	Wednesday	2:00 - 4:00 pm	CHERISHED KIDNEYS: (PATIENT'S FORUM) 12th Floor Auditorium, CM
		5:00 pm	BLESSING OF KIDNEY LIFE GIFT KIDNEY FO 5th Floor CMC II
29 - 30	Thurs - Fri	8:00 am - 12:00 nn	MEDICAL MISSION AT R Roxas District, Q.C.

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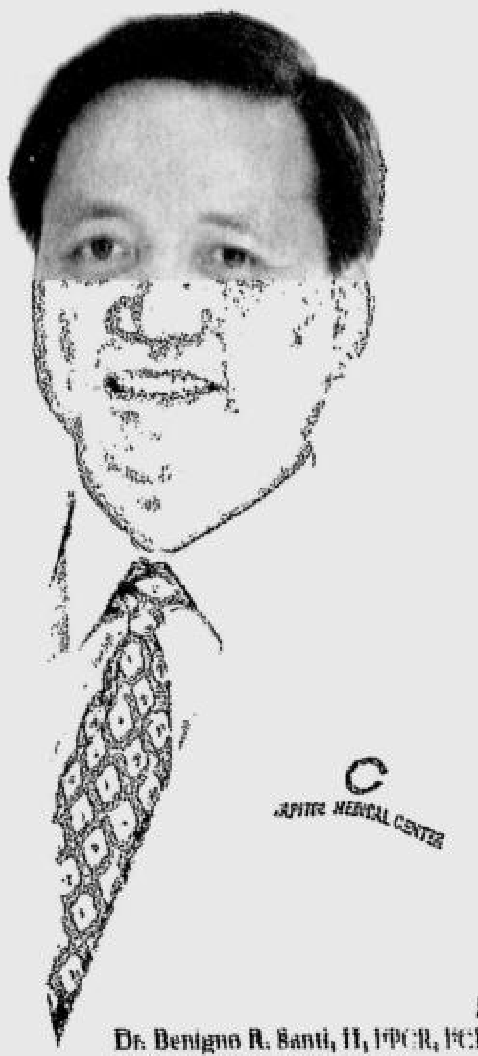

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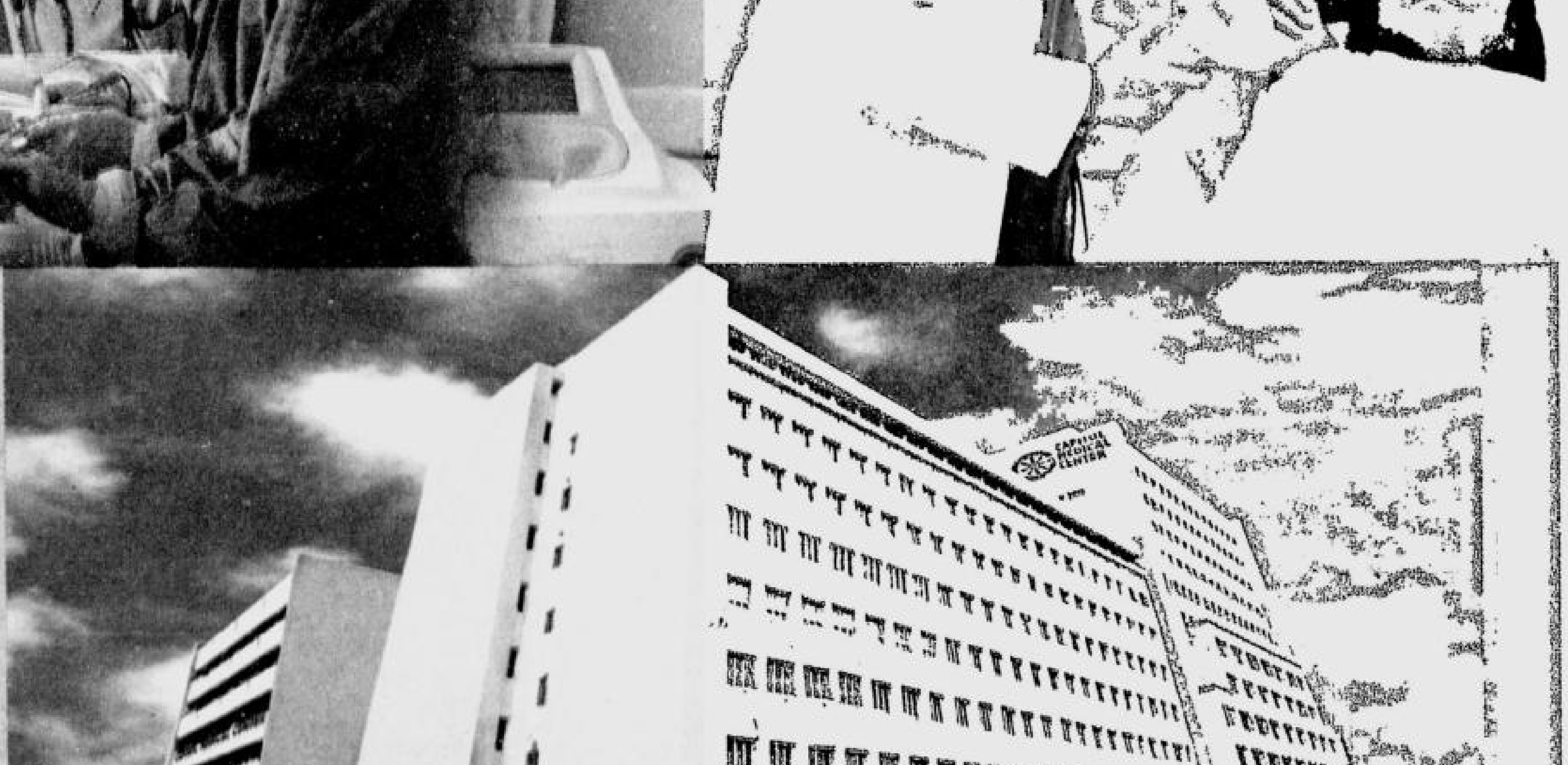

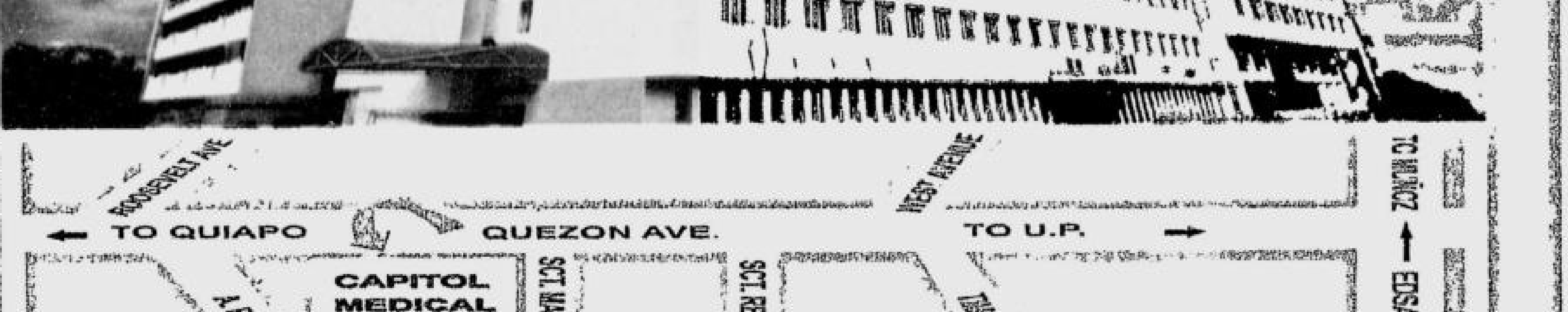
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OPINION

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Same old problems

EDITORIAL

THAT THE PHILIPPINE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IS in a bad shape has been known for the past two or three decades, but nothing really radical has been done to correct the situation. Remedies have at best been palliatives or stop-gap measures.

One recent example of a palliative is the creative arithmetic applied by President Macapagal-Arroyo who, by decreeing the adoption of a double-shift schedule and a students to classroom ratio of 100 to 1, "miraculously" solved a very real shortage of 74,000 classrooms.

The classroom shortage is only a part of the whole picture of an educational system that is deteriorating, if not actually in a state of utter disrepair. Every year, the complaints are the same: a shortage of classrooms, desks and textbooks and a lack of trained teachers. What is worse is that some of the textbooks have been found to contain many errors.

Because of the shortage of classrooms, some familiar scenes are expected to be repeated at the opening of classes this year: classes being held under the trees and in corridors and some, probably, even out in the streets. Many students will have to bear the stifling heat in overcrowded classrooms that are made to accommodate 45 or more children.

During the rainy season, in some schools that have leaking roofs, raindrops will be falling on the heads of students. A teacher once complained that she had to use a part of her meager salary to buy a sealant to plug the big holes in the roof of her classroom. We wonder how many rooms are like this?

The physical setting, of course, is secondary in importance to the content of education. But is it the ideal setting for students to be packed into small rooms like sardines, or be made to rush through several subjects in four-hour sessions, so that the next batch can be accommodated for the afternoon session? And how can we expect students to learn a lot if five or six of them have to share one textbook?

The teachers are the key people in the educational system. But how can we expect the teachers to teach well if they themselves are ill-trained? There are many stories of teachers who are semi-literate or who teach their students the wrong things, or who are just one chapter ahead of their students in digesting the books they use in teaching. The best teachers are leaving for jobs abroad, and the mediocre ones are left to teach the nation's youth in the public schools. How can we expect our children to do well in school if they have poorly educated teachers?

Education is supposed to get the biggest share of the national budget, but it is not: debt service gets the biggest outlay. (In the current national budget, the outlay for debt service is P301.7 billion, or almost three times the P102-billion appropriation for the Department of Education.) It is education that will lift the nation from the morass of poverty and ignorance, but the government is not appropriating enough money for it.

In a stroke of serendipity, however, the recent incident where the President publicly rebuked acting Education Secretary Fe Hidalgo for not remembering her "creative" solution to the problem of classroom shortage has yielded a good result. Members of the bicameral conference committee on the proposed 2006 national budget agreed to increase the Department of Education's P108-billion outlay by about P4 billion.

Any increase is welcome, but still it looks like a drop in the bucket when viewed against the vast desert of problems in which the educational system is slowly dying. The Department of Education has to be given a bigger outlay every year. New funds have to be allocated to build more classrooms and provide textbooks for the millions of students who report for enrollment in June. A bigger outlay has to be allocated for teachers, to raise their salaries as well as to give them further education and training in their subjects.

The government has to put an end to the era of palliatives. A commission composed of representatives of the executive and legislative branches, the academe and the private sector should perhaps reexamine the educational system and propose reforms, not just in the infrastructure of the system but, more importantly, in the content of the teaching.

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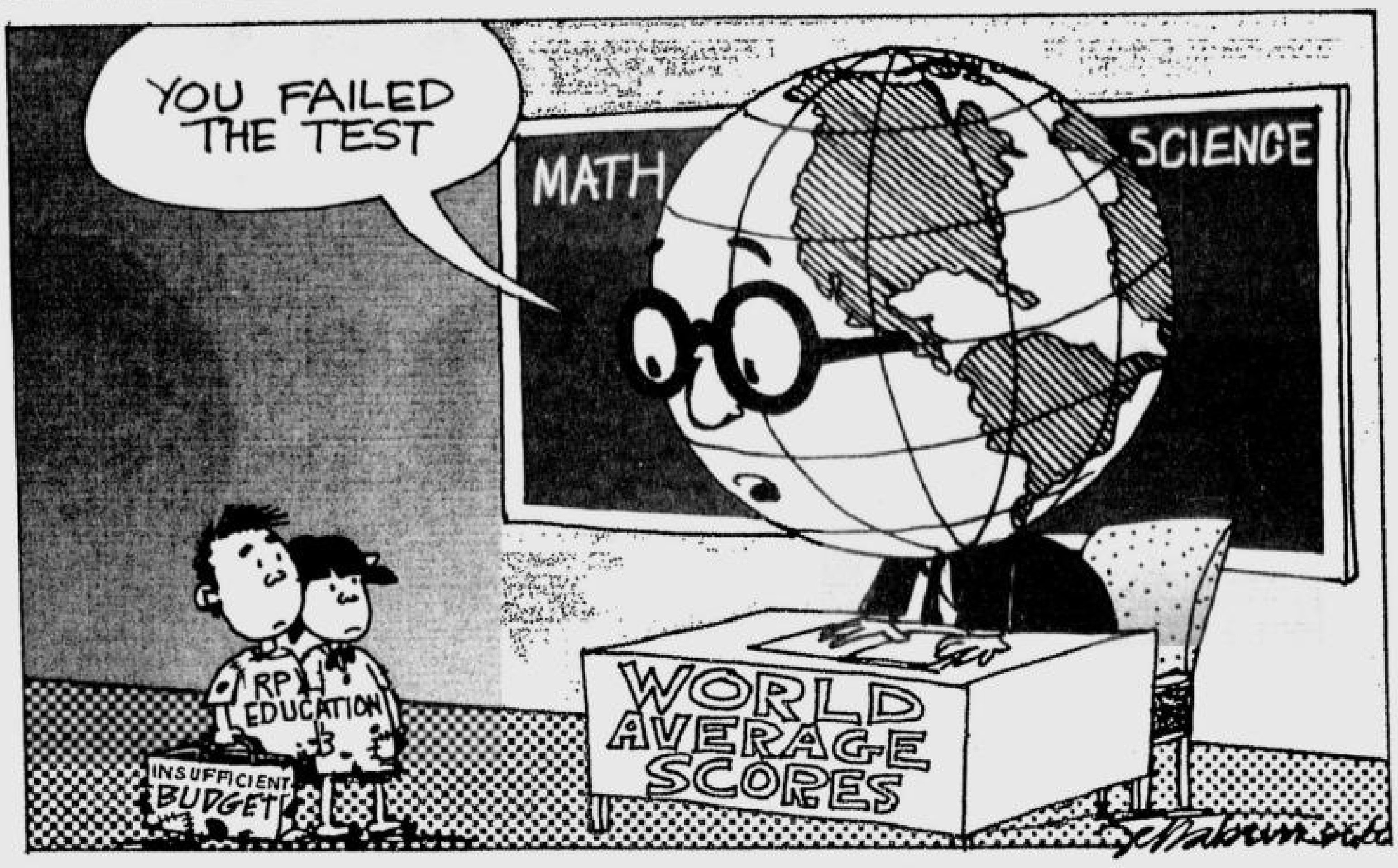

Barrio fiesta

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

IT'S BEEN 18 MONTHS SINCE CEBU CITY Mayor Tomas Osmeña put up a P20,000 bounty for every "criminal" killed. City Hall today is necklaced with 162 murders by vigilantes. All remain unsolved. The likelihood of triggermen or masterminds being held to account is zero.

The killings have scared "criminals," shrugs Osmeña. "I'm happy some of those killed are robbers. As long as there are fewer robberies and snatchings, it's not so bad."

Jose Maria Sison used the same argument, draped with a Mao Zedong axiom, to justify the assassination of communists who left the party like Popoy Lagman, Rolly Kintanar and Arturo Tabara. "You kill the chickens to scare the monkeys," Mao explained after he slaughtered party dissidents.

Will delegates to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summit in Cebu feel safer if they read streamers saying: "Until Further Orders from the Mayor, The Fifth Commandment Remains Repealed In This City"?

Ricardo Cardinal Vidal has led his Church in protesting summary executions. Murder forecloses options for reform, Catholic Church leaders have warned. Victim No. 161 fell with prison release papers tucked into his back pocket.

There are more important things than fulfilling a constitutional oath "to do justice to every man," Osmeña retorts. Such as?

Such as laying out a P20-million barrio fiesta for over 800 foreign journalists. They'll converge in Cebu in December when 17 heads of states gather for the Asean Summit, followed by the Asean Plus Three and East Asian meetings.

The cash would go to "entertaining foreign journalists, including rest and recreation, food and sports," gushed the eager host. Focus would be on media from Japan and South Korea, because they're major tourism markets. "We want them to have the time of their lives."

The Grand Convention Center will be cordoned off as a dining area. He'll swamp the foreign press with catalogues on tourist sites, etc. "*Pasensya na lang* (Bear with us), but it's going to be lavish," Osmeña said.

This mayor can host sumptuous barrio fiestas, specially if taxpayers foot the bill. But what if only *istambays* came?

Will journalists from Japan's Nihon Shimbun Kezai, France's Le Monde, British Broadcasting Corp., CNN, South Korea's Chosun Ilbo or The New York Time, drive 18 kilometers, one way, from the summit site in Mactan, for a "lavish lunch"?

Osmeña listens only to Osmeña. But someone should set His Honor straight on the press, for his own good, let alone the country. The summit newsmen are not tourism PR hacks. They're hard-nosed professionals covering a major conference with crosscutting issues.

How can the Philippines, as the region's weakest link in the fight against terror, be helped to neutralize graduates of Mindanao's training camps? How can we seal the seepage from Indonesia as that country cracks down on terrorists? There's Burma's arbitrary detention of Nobel Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. North Korea's nuclear threat is on the table. China's spiraling demand for resources, India's emergence as a potential superpower, the impact of the new US immigration law on limited pools of trained manpower in Asean countries are of concern.

Priority for the press are: reliable communication facilities; timely news briefings; photo ops; text of official statements; flight schedules, interview arrangements, etc. How do you assist 17 press secretaries accompanying 17 heads of state? Isn't this where "lavish" funds can be better applied?

US President George Bush should not come, Osmeña suddenly erupted. The US delegation may not have enough accommodations.

"Why Shoo Away George?" asked Cebu Daily News columnist Ricky Poca. The US always dialogued with Asean. "Was Osmeña's position a reaction to the US government's critical position on the vigilante killings?".

There's no US position on Cebu's summary executions—yet. That may come in the US State Department's next annual global report on human rights.

US Embassy political affairs officer Rachel Wolfe met with the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) 7 and Integrated Bar officials on vigilante killings, the papers reported. The US is concerned that government protect its democratic institutions, US Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney was quoted as saying in a separate radio interview.

US participation in Asean summits, and other dialogue partners like China and Australia, is not within a barrio fiesta's ambit. That's the President's prerogative. She decides that issue in consultation with nine other Asean nations.

Osmeña therefore should not fret. After all, the heads of state will meet, not in Cebu, but across the channel, on Mactan Island. He should worry more if the monkeys aren't scared despite the slaughtered chickens.

Good news, bad news

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

WE'VE GOT GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS.

The good news is that GMA wants to abolish the death penalty. Ignacio Bunye says his boss sees an "urgent need" to repeal the law on death penalty as "its imposition has not served its principal purpose of effectively deterring the commission of heinous crimes."

The bad news is that it was GMA herself who wanted it in the first place to appease the Chinese businessmen whose children were being routinely kidnapped and sometimes killed. Indeed it was she who openly advertised the impending execution of several Death Row inmates but backed down in the face of the combined pressure of the Catholic Church and the international community. The anti-death penalty groups were already saying then that all the studies showed that what deterred crimes, heinous or not, was not the threat that criminals would be sent into spasms by poison or have their balls cut but the reasonable certainty that they would get caught.

The worse news is that whether or not the death penalty gets affirmed or revoked, there is a death penalty currently and viciously being enforced in this country. Indeed, a completely illegal, or illegitimate, one, like its source. As of last count, more than 600 activists and journalists have been murdered since GMA took over the reins of government, most of the victims coming from Bayan Muna, the leftist group that completely ironically helped GMA replace Erap. Unlike the death penalty carried out by the official executioners, which applies to people deemed guilty beyond a shadow of doubt, the death penalty being carried out by death squads applies to people who have been true to their calling within a reasonable degree of certainty. With this wholesale slaughter, who needs the death penalty?

The worst news is that if the death penalty is abolished, it can't apply to the ringleaders of this thuggish regime, who are guilty of the most heinous crimes imaginable.

The good news is that GMA is determined to become this country's number one salesperson.

The bad news is that she stands to replace the much maligned Moro trader. According to urban, or rural, legend, the Moro trader was selling a woman some gold jewelry when she suddenly produced vinegar and demanded that the trader soak his wares in it to see if they were really gold. The jewelry promptly turned to dross, and the trader exclaimed. "Ay, the vinegar is fake." According to urban and rural history, GMA was selling her accomplishments in education to the public when her education secretary came out with figures to show that the lack of classrooms in this country had reached dire proportions. GMA exclaimed, "Ay my education secretary is fake."

The worse news is that she is truly selling the country—short. Very, very short.

The good news is that the economy grew by 5.5 percent during the first quarter of this year. OFW remittances in particular grew by 5.8 percent, up from 4.9 percent last year.

The bad news is that at the same time lowly Vietnam grew by 10 percent. The worse news is that our growth has absolutely no impact on the poor, who continue to grow poorer, and hungrier.

The worst news is that the future looks bleak. As the ADB warned the other month: "There is no immediate prospect of a significant improvement in the growth outlook... Investment continues to lag, while the dependence of growth on consumption and on remittance inflows limits prospects... Unemployment remains stubbornly high. Although generating subsequent remittance income, (OFW) emigration on this scale comes at a high cost in terms of loss of knowledge and skills, and can have high social costs as well."

The good news is that the BIR will run after tax cheats in the Executive and Congress. It has been getting tips from anonymous sources that Cabinet members and congressmen have not been paying the right taxes.

The bad news is that the BIR has yet to assess the genuineness of the tips. Why? All it needs to do is look at the congressmen who voted against the impeachment bid to find undeclared income.

The worse news is: Why doesn't the BIR look at the assets and liabilities of one Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and one Jose Pidal?

The worst news is that Judy Ann Santos is being hounded for tax evasion.

The good news is that GMA is telling parents to buy their children's school needs in Divisoria. The bad news is that she is telling Pidal to buy their creature wants in San Francisco. The good news is that the Supreme Court has scrapped EO 464, CPR and 1017. The bad news is that government officials aren't appearing before the Senate anyway, demonstrators cannot march to Mendiola anyway, and dictatorship is being mounted anyway. The good news is that Jose de V and Fidel R want to change a genuine Charter. The bad news is that they do not want to change a fake President.

The good news is that we will become an Enchanted Kingdom 20 years from now. The bad news is that Gloria says so.

* * *

There's bad news and good news. The bad news is that Nitoy Adriano's daughter, Michelle Alexis, has a hole in her heart, also called rheumatic heart disease. Nitoy is the awesome lead guitar of the awesome Jerks. Michelle, now 17, has suffered from the disease from birth and has been undergoing treatment since. That costs money, and contrary to rumor, money and musicians are not bosom buddies. Big money and serious musicians especially.

The good news is that Nitoy is not lacking in friends and admirers who've always given a helping hand. They will again do so tonight, as hopefully will you. There's a benefit tonight for Michelle at '70s Bistro. The usual suspects are playing: Noel Cabangon, Gary Granada, Cooky Chua, Asin and the Jerks, of course. You don't come, you must have a hole in your heart, one that goes by quite another medical term.

Marcos assets should have been confiscated

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THAT PRESIDENTIAL Chief of Staff Michael Defensor termed the one-year tenure of first PCGG Chair Jovito Salonga as a do-nothing term. Perhaps Defensor was still a student then, but it was to Salonga and his first group at the Presidential Commission on Good Government, which included Ramon Diaz, Pedro Yap, Mary Concepcion Bautista, Raul Daza and Quentin Doromal, that the most difficult task of that agency was given. And this was to run after the mind-boggling assets of Ferdinand Marcos and his cronies around the world and place them under sequestration. This was most difficult because the lawyers of the Marcos gang were smart and what followed was a game of wits as well as a race against time, as foreign governments had their own rules governing the freezing of assets.

* * *

Looking back, what the Cory government should have been done was confiscate outright the assets of the Marcoses and their cronies under the revolutionary government, and immediately put them up for sale, instead of sequestering them, which entailed endless litigation. Anything was possible under the revolutionary government which lasted from February 1986 to February 1987, when the new Constitution was ratified. But 20 years after the Marcoses fled, the government is still caught in an expensive and tedious litigation process. This has given rise to the position taken by many, including PCGG officials today, that negotiating a compromise is a better move. But this is anathema to even more people, including Salonga who believes that forging a compromise would be immoral.

* * *

The Unesco-International Theater Institute World Congress late last month saw many eminent leaders from Africa flying to Manila. Among the most distinguished and erudite was Dr. Essop Goolam Pahad, minister of culture of the Republic of South Africa, who has jurisdiction also over such issues as the rights of children, the status of disabled people and of women, the national youth commission and government communication and information system. A tall South African married to a British-born lady, the genial Dr. Pahad earned his master's degree in African Politics from the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom and earned his doctorate in history at the same university.

* * *

I learned that Pahad is one of the most powerful ministers in South African President Mbeki's Cabinet. Looking at his biodata, I could understand why. He and Mbeki, both of them black, shared many years of political activism as they fought for equal rights for the black people in South Africa, under the inspiration of the legendary Nelson Mandela, who was jailed for 28 years. After the African National Congress (ANC) was banned, Pahad became active in the underground. After his arrest and a brief imprisonment, he went into exile in Russia, Angola and London, serving in the leadership structures of the ANC and the South African Communist Party. In 1990, he returned to South Africa and began his climb to the top alongside Mbeki.

* * *

I had a chance to see once again the world-famous Bayanihan Dancers when they entertained the Unesco-ITI delegates at the dinner hosted by the Department of Tourism, and I must say *walang kupas ang Bayanihan*. It remains the same professional dance company that features a bevy of exquisite dancers who have bedazzled the world with their beauty and joie de vivre, their lovely costumes and the dances from various parts of the archipelago.

* * *

I would like to point out, too, the professional way personnel of the Cultural Center of the Philippines conducted themselves. One night, after watching the monodrama, "Antigone," by the Lithuanian actress Birute Mar, my husband, our friend Ileana Cruz and I decided to let others file out of the CCP's Little Theater first. Two elderly Italians rushed back and started looking all over the seats in front of us. We asked them what was the problem and one of them kept saying, "My pocket, my pocket." We quickly realized that he had lost his wallet. We called an usher to help as we started to look in the darkened theater. The usher went down on his knees and intently searched under the seats and found it. He gave the wallet back to the Italian, who was beside himself with joy, and offered him a reward. I told the hesitant usher to accept it, for the man was grateful for his help. Unfortunately I failed to get his name.

* * *

This column featured last week the 90th birthday of the legendary Fr. James Reuter, S.J., theater man, writer and communicator for the Church, who has worked in the Philippines since his arrival here in 1938. Another Jesuit, the low-profile Fr. Thomas Green, is celebrating his 50th year in the Philippines on June 12, and a tribute to him is very much in order. Father Green, who teaches both at the Loyola School of Theology and San Jose Seminary, graduated from Notre Dame University with a doctorate in philosophy of science. He has published seven books (principally on philosophy and psycho-spirituality and spiritual direction) which have been translated into 17 languages. He put up a foundation in his parents' name, which grants college scholarships (today the foundation has five scholars studying in Ateneo).

Father Green is also a much sought-after speaker here and abroad. Every year he travels to different countries which have arranged lectures for him.

A group of men and women to whom he has given spiritual guidance is planning a simple celebration of his golden jubilee in the Philippines, details of which will be announced later. One idea is to raise donations for his scholarship fund for needy students. Remy Ignacio, mother of Msgr. Clem Ignacio and who knows Father Green's brother and sister, is the "hidden" coordinator.

Congratulations to the jubilarian.

Small schools might be the answer

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

A FRONT-PAGE SERIES IN THIS PAPER HAS TRIED to give a comprehensive picture of the problems confronting the Philippine education system. And the problems are plenty—from overcrowded classes to inept teachers, students who move through the system even as they never learn to read or write, and national science and mathematics test scores that manage to land us on top…of Botswana, Ghana and South Africa (and Saudi Arabia in math) among all other countries.

But judging from the pictures accompanying the stories, as well as those used in other newspapers and the video used by TV news reports, one would think the only problem confronting the Philippine educational system is the shortage of classrooms and school buildings. This is the issue, after all, that got our President in a monumental public hissy fit, leading to the chastisement of her DepEd OIC Fe Hidalgo who dared tell the truth about the classroom shortage.

Though there are several columns worth of opinion on a leader who is so averse to truth-telling that she would rather re-state a problem than address the problem itself, the classroom count is not what we'll be talking about here. The painful fact is, even if we manage to build enough classrooms and bridge the yawning gap between the number of schoolchildren and the existing number of classrooms, there's still no guarantee that Filipino elementary and high school students will be getting the education they deserve, or at least an education that would allow them to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with other graduates even from the world's most developed countries.

* * *

AS it turns out, even in developed countries, government, the private sector and educators are recognizing that it takes more than infrastructure to improve performance.

Last Sunday, the "Oprah" show focused on education innovations in the United States that seek to address the inadequacies of their educational system. One of these innovations is called the "small schools initiative" that seeks the establishment of new small neighborhood schools or the conversion of bigger public schools into small schools each with a smaller number of students. In Chicago, according to a website on the small schools initiative, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation donated $12 million for the conversion of five public schools into 15-20 autonomous smaller schools with no more than 400 students each.

What makes for a small school? It is characterized, most obviously, by a small, more manageable number of students, which makes for a "more intimate and personalized learning environment." But beyond a small population, a small school best serves its students when it works from a "cohesive vision" shared by the administration, faculty, parents and students themselves.

In 2000, the Bank Street College of Education conducted a study comparing small schools and more conventionally sized schools within the public school system of Chicago. The study found that the small schools reported higher attendance rates, fewer drop-outs, fewer course failures, lower incidents of disciplinary problems and violence, and higher teacher-student and parent and community member satisfaction than did bigger schools.

* * *

THE "OPRAH" show on educational innovations, particularly the small schools initiative, captured my attention mainly because my two children are products of one such "small school," a non-traditional school called "Community of Learners."

When my son was about four, I began searching for a pre-school for him. I had only one requirement: that the school provide something "different" from my own learning experience and not impose any of the more unpleasant aspects of schooling that I had to endure. By some stroke of luck, I heard of a group of young (at that time) teachers and graduates of UP's Child Development Center who were putting up their own school more in tune with their own philosophies and vision of early childhood education.

The small pre-school has since evolved into Community of Learners (better known among students as CL), which has grown into a full-fledged grade school and high school, though still small in population. While my son spent the elementary grades in a "big school" before we transferred him back to CL for high school, my daughter, now a comparative literature junior at UP Diliman, went to CL from nursery to high school. When I brought up the "Oprah" show topic with her, she said she had watched it, too, but soon tuned out because "we've been doing that a long time ago at CL."

* * *

IN "OPRAH," Bill and Melinda Gates made mention of their own "3 R's," a formula for successful schools which they said stood for: "rigor (of teaching), relevance (of the curriculum), and relationships (among teachers, students, parents, administrators and the community)."

There might be some who would question the "rigor" part of the teaching at CL, since it's non-traditional and students are free to set their own pace of learning and are not "graded" but rather evaluated according to how they could meet developmental age-appropriate goals. But there's no question about the curriculum's relevance, which is responsive to current events and community concerns, and about the relationships fostered among all the stakeholders, so much so that alumni drop by the school periodically for occasions like the annual Christmas bonfire and the graduation rites.

Small schools might seem a luxury for an educational system that must cope with such basics as classrooms, books and even trained teachers. But perhaps the answer to our never-ending problems lies not in building more and bigger schools, but in creating smaller, more intimate learning environments where everyone is a learner.

Morocco's veiled feminists

WORLD VIEW

Fatima Sadiqi

IT IS OFTEN ASSUMED THAT MODERN FEMINISM has no place, and thus can make little headway, in societies undergoing a religious revival, particularly in the Islamic world. But the real progress made in recent years on women's rights in Morocco suggests otherwise: a unique combination of activism by secular and religious women, the calculations of political parties, and a significant role for the king has led to real progress.

Pioneering Moroccan feminists began their work soon after independence in 1956. By and large representative of a liberal perspective, they nonetheless recognized the importance of Islam in Moroccan society. As a result, they took care to frame their demands in ways that provided a measure of Islamic identity.

This first generation of Moroccan feminists was guided by a key insight: the interactions of men and women were not dictated by religion, but by social practices that had often used religion as a means of reinforcement. For example, women and their sexual purity were linked with the honor of men and their families—a connection that was defended by grounding it in Islam. For these activists, such linkages were intended to maintain control over women, and were part of Moroccan society, not Islam.

By the 1990s, Morocco was feeling the impact of the Iranian Revolution and America's post-Cold War emergence as the sole global superpower. Like many Muslim countries in this new era, Morocco began to experience a revitalization of political Islam. This threatened the authority of the king, who had overseen the religious establishment, as well as feminists' efforts to moderate Morocco's Family Law, which had been based on a rigid view of religious teachings.

But the same de-centralization of authority that had empowered Islamist movements also empowered Moroccan women. Better educated and more in touch with global currents through the media or their own travel, women began participating in Moroccan political debates. They challenged the disparities in legal treatment of women, broached new ideas concerning the role of women in Moroccan society, and questioned practices that had long been understood as Islamic.

Their strategy shifted as well, focusing on the growing importance of religious values in shaping societies and global relations. As a result, the veil became a mechanism for making their presence felt publicly and gaining credibility within religious debates. Over the past decade, the number of Moroccan women taking an active role in Islamist associations or political parties increased dramatically.

The growing significance of the veil also highlighted important differences between men and women in Morocco. For many men, Islamist or not, the veil remains a sign of Islamic affiliation and traditional piety. For many women, however, the veil is a token of liberation—an indication that they have engaged with the Moroccan public in ways that reflect their own sense of religious practice.

Liberal Moroccan feminists understand this use of the veil by many Moroccan women, and they have encouraged a dialogue with veiled activists from the Islamist camp. The signs of cooperation have been clear: increasing use of Arabic, rather than French, discussions that incorporate real knowledge of Islamic scripture, and recognition that Islam remains distinct from traditional practices.

At the same time, liberal feminists began to invest more effort in civic associations, rather than political parties. This broadened their focus to Moroccan society as a whole and questions of how people could be empowered to improve their lives. As a result, liberal feminists have increased their influence among both decision makers and religious women.

All of this comes at a time of greater political openness and democratization: the first ever socialist government in 1998, a younger and more open king—described by democrats of both sexes of Morocco's "first feminist"—who took the throne in 1999, and a quota system that brought 35 women into the Parliament in 2002. This Parliament enacted a new Family Law in 2004 that mandates full equality between men and women as "head of household," full authority for state courts in matters of divorce, creation of special family courts, and the possibility of maternal custody in case of divorce.

Thus, in Morocco, it is difficult to speak of separate "secular" and "Islamic" feminisms. Women are increasingly making the argument that they have been deliberately excluded from a full role in society not because Islam prescribes it, but because Islam was revealed in a deeply patriarchal social context. Feminist interpretations of religious texts—encouraged by increasing numbers of women in prominent religious positions—continue to challenge traditionalists of all stripes.

The women's movement in Morocco, which now bridges secular and religious communities, is setting an example of the power of social thought in a traditional society. Revisiting traditional interpretations of Scripture is not the end of the story. Out of this ferment, Morocco has not only revised its Family Law, but also fundamental laws governing nationality, media ownership and political organizations.

Women's advocacy has also shaped a new approach to poverty alleviation in Morocco, in the form of the National Initiative for Human Development, which integrates efforts to improve education with better sanitation and housing. It is no exaggeration to say that the Moroccan women's movement has become the cutting edge of reform, engaging Islamization, modernization, democratization and feminism. *Project Syndicate*

Fatima Sadiqi is professor of linguistics at the University of Fez, and founder and president of the Center for Research on Women.

Choices

YOUNG BLOOD

Jose Benigno A. Gonzales

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

I SLOWLY TURNED THE KEY, PUSHED THE DOOR OPEN, and wearily dragged my feet into my bedroom. Absentmindedly, I threw my bag on the couch, and plopped down on my bed, the sweet smell of the soft comforter coaxing me to sleep. Fatigue began to creep over my body, but I grinned happily as I remembered today's accomplishments: I had done my laundry (which actually meant bringing my soiled clothes to the laundry shop down the alley near the *talipapa*); wrote my English paper; checked my e-mail/friendster/ym; practiced for my Math presentation; got to participate in the YoJam worship service to praise God for the wonderful things that happened in my life; and finally caught the last full show of "Red Eye" (you just have to love Rachel McAdams) at the mall with my friends.

I hadn't done so many things in one day when I was staying in Quezon City with my parents. But I love my new-found freedom.

Since I started living in Baguio, freedom has defined my existence. In high school, I was the type of person who was scared of freedom. I was too timid or too frightened to discover better pastures and explore new horizons, having lived comfortably within my own skin for so long. In fact, I felt contented with my life. It never occurred to me that my world would change so much the moment I lived away from home.

Things changed very quickly from the moment I graduated from high school. I said farewell to my friends and flew to the United States for a short vacation. The next thing I knew, my parents were hurrying me up here in the mountains. I arrived from the US one day and I was off to Baguio on a Victory bus the following day.

At first, I felt disoriented in my new school. I kept asking myself what I was doing in this mountainous place, away from Manila. I did not have the luxury of having some kind of transition period from high school life to college. The transition started right here, right at the beginning of the first semester.

My classmates in my block seemed so different from the guys I knew in high school. I could not seem to relate to them, or even blend with them.

And the subjects I took—they made my life a living hell. My head ached as I sat down for our Bio 10 lecture. I barely understood the terms the professor was mouthing in my Math 1 class, and it was supposed to be a basic subject for freshmen. I felt like I was the odd man out, believing that I was surrounded by geeks who knew everything from the stages of meiosis to the Pythagorean Theorem.

And what was my redeeming grace in this place where everyone seemed to be good in everything? The answer came to me after I passed our first English paper. It was on "How much a Filipino I am." I didn't feel very good writing that paper. All I did was just type away and submit it before the deadline. So I was pleasantly surprised to get a grade of 1.5 for that.

I decided to concentrate on my writing. I had some experience in the field in grade school and high school, so why not continue in college?

As regards the subjects I had a hard time with, I decided to put some extra effort to studying them. I borrowed a huge volume of Biology from my board mates and buried my nose in it until I got dizzy. I worked on my Math formulas many nights before my exams.

My block mates and I started bonding during the nights of practicing for Freshie Night. Even though we did not win, we were happy because we had found a family within our block. We have our differences but despite them, each of us managed to fit into the group like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

Probably the most important thing I have learned so at the University of the Philippines Baguio is that freedom comes with a price. People are gifted with the power of choice; they are not mindless robots programmed to do certain tasks. I could have given up trying to figure out my Natural Science subjects. I could have ignored my block mates and refused to have anything to do with them. I could have skipped my classes and hung out in the mall all day, without my parents knowing about it. But I did not, and I will not do it.

Why? Because I choose to. I want to exercise my freedom responsibly instead of abusing it lest I end up working with a mop and a bucket to earn a living for the rest of my life. Our choices in life have corresponding consequences, and wise is the person who examines such consequences carefully before exercising his freedom to choose.

In my room that night after one full day spent wisely, I closed my eyes and drifted off to sleep, knowing that tomorrow would be another day of choices.

Jose Benigno A. Gonzales, 18, is an incoming sophomore BA Communication student at the University of the Philippines in Baguio.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Hara-kiri

"In ordering Senator (Lito) Lapid to run for mayor of Makati, President Arroyo pulls out her last straggler in the Senate and pushes him to commit political hara-kiri."

—Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

No RP law violated

"No Philippine law has been violated. So let us not invent one just so we can ensnare (deposed President Joseph) Erap (Estrada)."

—Sen. Joker Arroyo, advising Malacañang not to meddle with the case of Leandro Aragoncillo who was charged in the United States with passing classified information to the deposed president and other local politicians

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Dishonorable eviction

ONE WAY TO ENSURE THAT RETIRED senior officers vacate their quarters inside military bases is to make the release of their retirement pay contingent on their leaving their state-provided housing. This provision should be included in the contracts they sign before they make use of free quarters inside military bases.

Once they vacate their offices, they should likewise leave their quarters so that others on active duty can move in and avail themselves of the privilege. The military establishment should draw up corresponding rules and penalties in this regard.

The refusal of retired officers to vacate their quarters tarnishes the image of the military establishment. It is a reflection of the way they conducted themselves when they were still in the active service.

The recent incident in the Fort Bonifacio Naval Station in Taguig City, where retired officers had to be forcibly evicted from their quarters, has diminished public confidence in the officer corps.

—APOLONIO G. RAMOS,
42 Mindanao St.,
Marikina City

Human rights violations in Cuba are committed in Guantanamo

I READ WITH CURIOSITY THE INQUIRER editorial "A dismal record." (PDI, 5/16/06) I was disappointed with the editorial because it failed to live up to INQUIRER's motto, "Balanced news, fearless views."

Maybe, the INQUIRER was just not given an accurate picture of the human rights situation in Cuba by its biased sources. In the interest of balanced reporting, allow this "other source" to provide the INQUIRER another picture of the day-to-day reality in our country and our people's continuing struggle to defend our independence, sovereignty and dignity these past 138 long years—first against a common colonizer of our two countries, and then against the most powerful empire in history. It is also a struggle for the human rights not only of the Cubans but of all mankind.

Indeed, there are human rights violations in Cuba, but these are happening inside the illegal naval base in Guantanamo, a territory held by the United States against the Cuban people's will and in contravention of international laws.

In fact, the United States and its close allies kidnap and transport in secret flights hundreds of human beings and keep them in secret prisons. This is the reason the United States doesn't dare to bid for a post in the new Human Rights Council (HRC). Besides, it is afraid that it will not get the support of at least 96 of the 191 member-countries of the UN General Assembly.

In contrast, Cuba was voted as a member of the new HRC for three years by 135—or more than the two-thirds—of the UN member countries.

By the way, the United States, Israel, Palau and Marshall Islands—the same countries that voted against the UN resolution calling for an end to the "economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba"—are the same countries who voted against the UN resolution creating HRC.

The INQUIRER echoed the US Department of State position, saying, "The United States and other free nations have a duty to defend human rights and help spread democracy's blessings." Was the newspaper referring to the invasion of Iraq, where no weapons of mass destruction was found, or to the massacre of Shabra and Shatila, or to Cassinga?

The Mexican newspaper La Jornada, based on a letter signed by US Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice, reported last Apr. 15 that "The US government is (exerting pressure) to prevent Cuba from entering the UN Human Rights Council." In the same letter, Rice also tried to impose her criteria on the principles that countries aspiring for council membership must follow.

Cuba and other progressive-minded and socialist countries have slammed White House attempts to impose its policy on UN bodies.

INQUIRER should note that there is another world out there—and other sources of information, too—and that a better world is possible.

—JORGE REY JIMÉNEZ,
ambassador,
Embassy of Cuba

Use pork barrel to pay higher salaries

ACCORDING TO RECENT NEWS reports, the congressmen have increased their pork barrel to P60 million each this year; the senators have given themselves as much as P200 million each. Meanwhile, the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) has urged legislators to waive their P19-billion pork barrel this year to raise funds for the monthly pay increases of government workers. Former Sen. Ernesto Herrera requested Congress to take this step so the government can partially implement the salary increases.

While pork barrel is generally seen as public funds which legislators spend on projects for their constituents, it is allocated through last-minute insertions in the budget bill and is perceived by many people to be graft-ridden.

—ARTURO M. TOPACIO JR.,
UE Law Alumni Association,
Hall of Fame Awardee-Manila
and Cavite City

LETTERS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Nutrition data from FNRI

THE FOOD AND NUTRITION RESEARCH Institute of the Department of Science and Technology (FNRI-DOST) would like to thank the INQUIRER for using our nutrition data in the article titled "Prevalence of anemia in Filipino women noted." (PDI, 5/8/06)

However, we would like to clarify that the data were all from the 5th National Nutrition Survey (1998) conducted by the FNRI-DOST, not by the Department of Health. We also would like to take this opportunity to inform the public that the latest nutrition data from the 6th National Nutrition Survey (NNS) conducted in 2003 are now available.

We are grateful that INQUIRER is one with us in our efforts to make our people aware of the importance of proper nutrition.

—MARIO CAPANZANA, Ph.D.,
director,
Food and Nutrition Research Institute,
General Santos Avenue,
Bicutan, Taguig City

Pinoy slang is okay

ALLOW ME TO REACT TO ELSA M. GAVINO's letter. (PDI, 5/30/06) Perhaps, media and the advertising and marketing sectors are using "Pinoy slang" to relate more easily with people. But we can't really separate slang from the traditional/official Filipino language because our language is constantly evolving.

Gavino is right—the language commission should insist that the Filipino language be taught in our schools. But I believe that nothing is wrong if Pinoy slang is used in advertising.

Yes, Pinoy slang "murders" our language, but language evolves, especially here in the Philippines where we have many dialects. For more Pinoy slang, please visit: http://www.pinoyslang.com/

—JONATHAN DISCIPULO,
astig@pinoyslang.com

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

GAHASA SA PINAY
GAHASA SA PINAS!
JUSTICE FOR 'NICOLE'!
-TFSR PM
WOMEN'S ... NO. 1

MILITANTS rally against Gonzalez in front of DOJ

Opposition's weapon in Arroyo administration

NOTHING BETTER EXEMPLIFIES THE moral bankruptcy of the Arroyo administration than Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez. Under Gonzalez, the Department of Justice has ceased to function as a dispenser of justice; it now serves as a means for inflicting political retribution against the critics and political opponents of the administration.

Nothing fuels public unrest more than injustice, which beats even grinding poverty in igniting revolutions. It was an act of injustice—the Aquino assassination—that brought down the Marcos regime. Gonzalez is now about to provide a similar trigger for the unpopular Arroyo administration.

President Macapagal-Arroyo does not notice that her political opponents have ceased reacting to the things that Gonzalez is doing. Of course, they have come to realize that Gonzalez—because of his scandalous use of the DOJ to protect the selfish and narrow interests of the present administration—is the best promoter of its cause.

Stalin had Beria. Hitler had Himmler. Arroyo has Gonzalez. Gonzalez does not fit in the DOJ; he should have been in the Spanish Inquisition.

—GUILLERMO DE GREGORIO,
memong220ph@yahoo.com

Mothers

THOUGH A BIT LATE, COMING AS IT IS after mothers' day, let me pay tribute to mothers in recognition of their contribution to the nation:

M—Motherhood is the crowning glory of God's command "Go and multiply."

O—Often the road she trudges through in her journey with each of God's gifts to her—a child from her womb—from entry (conception) to exit (death) is strewn with thorns only she could suffer.

T—Tenderly, she looks at each bundle of joy that God sends her. Later, it is she who absorbs and eases the anxiety that crosses her and her child's way when sickness and untoward incidents strike.

H—Humbly she accepts situations that she cannot change and, like Mary on bended knees, submits, "Lord, Thy will be done according to Thy word."

E—Ever praising, she is ever supportive of each offspring's God-given talent, goodness and generous concern for others.

R—Recompense she seeks not from her children. Reminiscing the days—when all that she wanted was to build their self-confidence and character, to instill in them honor and fear of the Lord, to make life worth living—is her favorite pastime.

Please, Father God, give us more mothers with less envy but more concern for the country's progress; less greed but more generosity and readiness to share what they have in abundance with the least of our citizens.

Thank you, Father God, for mothers in Jesus' name.

—ROSARIO R. LIBERATO,
Sta. Lucia, Pasig City 1608

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Tuesday, June 6, 2006

Kaya nila...
Ikaw kaya,
kaya mo?
GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS
Tuesday
8:30 PM
ABC
Iba Tayo!

Provided by ClickTheCity.com
For more TV schedules:

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5				National Geographic	V League				Sentro	World's Most Amazing Videos	TNA Impact		Ultimate Guinness World Records		Big News	ALI			
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Calla Lily	TV Patrol World		Bituing Walang Ningning	Sa Piling Mo	Pinoy Big Brother	My Girl	Wonderful Life	Nagmamahal, Kapamilya			Insider
AXN		Lost (Season II)		House		Sports Disaster IV		Beastmaster (Season I)		Pensacola (Season III)		Guinness World Records 50 Yrs, 50 Records		CSI: Miami		CSI: NY (Season 2)		Rescue Me	
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Codename: Kids Next Door	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Simpsons		Power Rangers Ninja Storm	PokeMon	Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel		The Simpsons		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One		Dugo At Pag-ibig Sa Kapatagang Lupa				Dekada 70				I Think I'm In Love				Bestman 4 Better Not 4 Worse				Kailan Tama Ang Mali	
Cinemax	Come September (2:45 PM)				China 9 (4:25 PM)			Sleepless In Seattle (6:15 PM)				Night Falls On Manhattan				The Rats (9:50 PM)			Duel (11:40PM)
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	World News Asia	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Dominick Dunne's Power, Privilege & Justice		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Body Of Evidence	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Surface		Prison Break		Law & Order: Criminal Intent	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Unbelievable Bunny	Mickey Mouseworks	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven				Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Phil Of The Future	Kim Possible	Totally Spies		
ESPN		Pro Billiards '06 BCA Open 9-Ball Champ Fin.		Asian X Games '06 - Day 2						Atlantic Coast Conf Basketball: Duke Vs Florida State				Sportscenter Asia	Pool: Snooker Premier Snooker League '05				Sportscenter Asia
ETC	Insider Weekend	Project Runway		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		One Tree Hill 3		The O.C 3		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Blowout 2		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	Super Saints	Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus	ABCatholic	Angel Force	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	Mirror Of The Soul	Lord, Have Mercy	Behold the Man, Spirituality for Men	The Journey Home Encore		Daily Mass Live		Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus	The Good Code The Natural Law	Chaplet Of Divine Mercy	Octavia Dies	Web Of Faith	
Fox News		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat (2:45PM)	Now and Forever (3:15PM)	Endless Love 1: Autumn In My Heart By Popular Demand		Saiyuki	Dragonball Z	Gokusen	24 Oras		Captain Barbell	Majika	I Luv NY	Love Of The Condor Heroes	Jewel In The Palace		Bahay Mo Ba 'To			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		McLeod's Daughters V		The Magic Of Ordinary Days				Bewitched	The Nanny	Judging Amy		Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye III		Judging Amy		To The Ends Of The Earth			Judging Amy (11:45PM)
HBO				Purple Hearts (4:15PM)					Envy (6:20PM)			Deadwood 2: Boy The Earth Talks To		Dirty War			Van Helsing		
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Sorcerer Hunter	Soul Hunters	Lost Universe	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mumo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Sorcerer Hunter
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Saints On The Go	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Global Family Soree		ME TV		PTA Best Of The Philippines		Global Family Soree Amp	IBC News Tonight	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Raw				The Batman	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Arrested Development	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Comedy Central Presents	South Park	The Man Show
Lifestyle Network	Designer Remix	30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	Smart Solutions	Sensible Chic	At Home With	Emeril Live		Passion For Dessert	E! News Weekend		Look For Less	Martha		Napa Style	[illegible] Designer Living	Guess Who's Coming To Decorate	
MTV Philippines		Pimp My Ride		Handpicked: Kaya	Pop Inc.		MTV Hits (with SMS)			Get Spotted	MTV Hits	MTV Off the Beaten Track #101	MTV Ask: Jamie Foxx	TRL		Pimp My Ride		Sessions: Kala	Jams
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX Versions	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Top Of The Pops	Radio MYX	MYX News	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXLOG
National Geographic	Wildlife Diary	National Geographic Specials		Marine Machines		Wild Orphans	Wild Orphans	Top 5 - World of Reptiles		Wow! Tarantula!		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Air Crash Investigation: Attack Over Baghdad		Hunter Hunted: Stalked At Sea	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Alas	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Siya?	Teledyaryo W/ Rey Langit & Angelique Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition				[illegible] With Susan K			
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Bilang Na Ang Araw Mo				Marumming Damit				[illegible]				Ikaw Naman Ang [illegible]				[illegible]
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		[illegible]	Kakkido Star	MMS (My Music Station)		Mama		Magic Ring	Irene	Noel	Project 11	Family Zoo		News On Q	[illegible]		Irene	Over The Green Fields
RPN 9						Global Window	RPN Aksyon News	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Boarding House		Australia's Next Top Model		Paradise Hotel		Newswatch Now	Tuesday Night Thrill		
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		Quantum Global		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports						World Table Tennis Champs Singles		2006 [illegible] vs Germany				2006 NBA Playoffs WCF Game 4					Solar Sports Desk	2006 Hitachi [illegible] Women's Club	
Sports Plus			Inside the PGA	FIFA Preview Series	Quest for the Cup	French Open '06 Day 9 Highlights		French Open '06 [illegible]											
Star Movies	Harold & Kumar Go To White Castle			Madhouse			Sister Act 2			Big (7:15 PM)				Cheaper By The Dozen			Erin Brockovich (10:40 PM)		
Star World	Frasier	The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Ed		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	Charmed/ Life As We Know It		The O.C		North Shore/ Kevin Hill		Seinfeld	Charmed/ Life As We Know It
Studio 23	Bewitched	Naruto				Batman Beyond	Monkey Typhoon	Spirits	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	Andromeda		Smallville (8:20 PM)	Gilmore Girls (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Reality World

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(All in exact order)

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Sayyaf threatens attack on US troops in Jolo

RACE TO THE TOP EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU
Igorot children race to the Philippine flag at the top of a greasy bamboo pole during games at a festival in Banaue town in the province of Ifugao.

By Jim Gomez
AP

JOLO—THE US PACIFIC COMMANDER yesterday flew to a southern Philippine island plagued by al-Qaida-linked militants to visit American troops who are battling terrorism by treating the sick and helping build roads and schools.

The predominantly Muslim island of Jolo, about 940 kilometers south of Manila, is a crucial front in the war against Islamic militancy in Southeast Asia. It has served as a stronghold of the small but violent Abu Sayyaf group, which is on a US list of terrorist groups, and has suffered under a pestering image of lawlessness and violence.

Ahead of US Adm. William Fallon's visit, the Philippine military said early Monday it has received information from multiple sources that Abu Sayyaf militants were planning to attack government security forces and US troops within the next 24 to 48 hours.

Suspicious people

A statement distributed by the Philippine Army's 104th Brigade urged the public to report any suspicious people and information that may help thwart the militants' plans.

Hundreds of US troops in the southern Philippines have played a key role not only in training Filipino soldiers but in development projects to isolate the terrorists and win over local populations.

A US Navy hospital ship, the USNS Mercy, steamed close to Jolo's shore a few days ago to provide free medical services to poor villagers. Other American troops on Jolo have helped repair roads, bridges and schools and treat the sick for months.

Troops from the Mercy have set up three hospitals surrounded by concertina wire in Jolo town, US medical personal and aid workers have treated 300-500 patients a day for fever and cataracts while sending patients aboard the Mercy for more complicated surgery, US Air Force Maj. Anne Carbowski said.

PATIENTS from Jolo board a helicopter to be brought to the hospital ship USNS Mercy, which US authorities brought to Mindanao to win hearts and minds in the battle against terrorism. THERENCE KOH/AFP

Waiting in line

Outside the hospital gates, Ayang Sahibudin, 70, was one of hundreds of residents waiting in line to be examined. The mother of 11 complained of coughing blood and said it was her first trip to a hospital.

"I like Americans because they are giving us medical attention," she said. Asked about the militants, she replied: "The Abu Sayyaf bring only violence and fear to our town."

The Abu Sayyaf, which has been linked to Osama bin Laden's terror network, is notorious for deadly bombings, beheadings and kidnappings. Although Philippine military offensives have whittled down guerrillas to a few hundred in recent years and kept them mostly on the run, the ragtag group has been blamed for recent bomb attacks and killings of several Philippine Marines on Jolo.

Security officials believe the Abu Sayyaf's elusive leader, Khaddafy Janjalani, may be hiding on the jungle-clad island possibly with a few Indonesian allies from Jemaah Islamiyah, an Indonesian-based group blamed for terror attacks and plots across the region.

The guerrillas have plotted against but have failed to harm heavily protected American troops on Jolo, a police intelligence official said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters.

With a report from Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Bishop seeks accountability over 'jueteng'

CITY OF CALAPAN—AFTER MORE THAN one year of meetings to discuss issues and concerns in the province, with jueteng among them, Bishop Warlito Cajandig, convenor of the Provincial Care Council (PCC), challenged top officials of the province to accept responsibility for authorities' failure to put a stop to jueteng.

"If one does not want jueteng, can it proceed?" Cajandig asked.

He added that if the province could not really put a stop to jueteng, "let it be."

"And the forum has just to accept that it cannot be addressed, and to avoid further wasting time, move on to other issues which can be addressed through the forum," the bishop suggested.

The PCC is a multi-sectoral forum that meets monthly to discuss issues that are referred to responsible agencies.

Major leaders in the province and other concerned groups and individuals are participants in the regular forum.

Gov. Arnan Panaligan said he had issued several memoranda directing the police to immediately stop jueteng.

Scandal

"For a while, it did stop like during the jueteng scandal in the country, but it would resume again," Panaligan said.

He added that the national government must have a hand here, too.

Senior Supt. Marcos Flores, provincial police director, was absent for his side.

Supt. Alex Aceveda, his representative, admitted that jueteng existed in the province and that the police are doing their part.

He said almost 80 percent of their chiefs of police had submitted certifications that their areas were jueteng-free.

The certifications were signed by the mayors and some religious leaders.

Sincerity

Aceveda said, like the governor, they were also sincere in the campaign to put a stop to jueteng.

Fr. Jim Ruga, director of the Diocesan Service Commission, citing how jueteng was stopped in one of the previous administrations, proposed that a closed-door meeting be conducted among leaders concerned in finally stopping jueteng in the province. *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Soldiers, MILF rebs help free kidnapping victim

DAVAO CITY—GOVERNMENT soldiers and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels helped free a kidnapping victim in Lanao del Sur yesterday afternoon.

The victim, Palao Diamla, a court sheriff of Branch 10 of the 12th Regional Trial Court in Lanao del Sur, was kidnapped on May 31.

Brig. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, Southern Command deputy commander, said Diamla was kidnapped by an armed group led by a certain Magaluyan.

The abduction, Dolorfino said, was masterminded by Lininding Ramos, a defeated vice mayoral candidate in the town of Piagapo.

He said Diamla revealed that his abduction was a result of Ramos' election protest under Judge Amer Ibrahim of Branch 10.

Diamla was brought to Barangay Tawaan in Piagapo where he was held for five days.

JESUS Dureza, government adviser on peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), discusses with supporters of Moro leader Nur Misuari the visit of an Organization of the Islamic Conference team to review the 1996 peace pact with the Moro National Liberation Front. Talks with the MILF have led to cooperation between the government and the MILF on the campaign against criminality and terrorism. PDI PHOTO

The abductors allegedly told the victim that they were demanding a court order that would, in effect, make Ramos vice mayor of Balindong.

"The safe release of the victim was a joint operation of the Marines, police and the MILF," Dolorfino said.

He said the kidnappers released the victim due to pressure from negotiators, including Vice Governor Bae Monera Macabangon, military soldiers and the MILF.

The kidnappers freed Diamla after they were given a two-hour extension of a noon deadline yesterday.

"Their exit areas were already blocked by the Marines and the police," Dolorfino said.

The kidnappers took Diamla's mobile phone and P8,000 in cash.

Joselle Badilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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Ex-DepEd chief says permanent secretary needed

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—FORMER Education Secretary Florencio Abad found no fault in President Macapagal-Arroyo's outburst on acting Education Secretary Fe Hidalgo in a recent Cabinet meeting or in the President's ruling out of a shortage of classrooms.

The basic problem, he said, was Ms Arroyo has kept Hidalgo "too long" in an officer-in-charge (OIC) status.

"It's tough being an OIC for eight months. You can't get the bureaucracy moving. People tend to hold off and wait," Abad said when reached through his mobile phone from Batanes.

He said the delay in the appointment of a permanent secretary at the Department of Education indicated that the President was "not governing that agency well enough," considering that it carried a "delicate mission."

Abad, along with nine other Cabinet officials, resigned from the post at the height of election rigging controversies in July last year.

"My appeal is that the President should make Ms Hidalgo permanent or appoint another to a permanent position. She should make that decision right away so people on the ground like the principals, teachers and superintendents could have a permanent leadership to look up to," he said.

He said he saw the television footage of Ms Arroyo's outburst.

"I know the thinking of the President. It's not that she wants 100 students in a classroom at the same time. What she wants is to maximize the use of classrooms," said Abad.

He said the DepEd had long adopted the policy of using classrooms in two or three shifts in congested schools.

"It's a response to a situation when there's no money. It's the next best thing that can be done," he said.

The policy, he said, has been applied in high schools in congested urban areas like Metro Manila and Antipolo City.

In rural areas, classroom shortage has not been much of a problem, he said.

He said the DepEd began the education voucher system last year to decongest public secondary schools. Under this scheme, high school students get a yearly subsidy of P4,000 when they transfer to private schools.

The DepEd has also tried to cope with the lack of classrooms by renting facilities in communities.

The challenge for the DepEd, Abad said, was to "bring the deficit to a manageable minimum [level]."

An education crisis exists as manifested in the low percentage of passing in board exams for professionals, achievement tests administered among elementary and high school students, and level of discourse on television, the former education official said.

"[The education crisis] is worse than the crisis of leadership we are going through," he said. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

PROPAGANDA VALUE AP

In a handout photo released by the US Navy, a woman and her child receive care from a Medical Civic Action Program in Basilan. Medical and dental services are being provided by doctors and medical personnel from the US Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy.

Beneficiaries of pork from Palace lobby to keep funds

BAGUIO CITY—MALACAÑANG has asked beneficiaries of President Macapagal-Arroyo's discretionary funds to fight for its retention in this year's budget after the Senate draft of the 2006 general appropriations act reduced her allocation.

The Cordillera People's Liberation Army, a militia formed by slain rebel priest Conrado Balweg, submitted a resolution to the Senate on June 1, pointing out that Ms Arroyo's discretionary funds would be used for the development of villages where remnants of the group have retired.

Marcelina Bahatan, president of the Cordillera Bodong Administration (CBAd), the CPLA's political arm, said Secretary Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser on the peace process, asked the permission of CPLA leaders on May 26 to speak out on their behalf that the discretionary funds would go to antipoverty measures.

Cha-cha

Bahatan said the CPLA was aware that the senators intended to reduce administration support for a private initiative seeking constitutional change, fearing that Charter amendments were meant to keep Ms Arroyo in power.

She said the CPLA addressed its resolution to Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, "because he is the most vocal advocate of clipping the President's [pork barrel]," and to Sen. Manuel Villar, chair of the finance committee.

Villar announced last week that his committee cut P31.1 billion from the budget proposed by the Palace, and which was passed untouched by the House of Representatives.

One of the budget items he deleted was the P3.69 billion appropriated for Ms Arroyo's "Kalayaan Barangay" program.

It is similar to the government's Kapit Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan (Kalahi) program that fuses all agency resources to attain community development for poor villages.

The CPLA has included 10 villages in the Kalayaan program's original 150 target sites on the request of Dureza and the Department of Agrarian Reform here.

Projects

Bahatan said the CPLA's Kalayaan villages would have acquired funds to build roads and install potable water systems and power transmission lines from Ms Arroyo's pork barrel.

The CPLA resolution said these villages "are ready for fast economic development," provided government helped in providing the infrastructure facilities.

"Most of the tribal communities are until now [lacking in] transportation, electrification, school buildings … teachers [because] most teachers [assigned there] are not permanently [tenured] and enough water supply," the resolution said.

The CPLA signed a peace agreement with the government, which was brokered between Balweg and then President Corazon Aquino in 1986.

But the resolution said the aspirations of the CPLA to help develop the tribal communities of the Cordillera had not yet been realized, 20 years after the peace agreement was signed on Sept. 13, 1986.

Bucloc (Abra) Mayor Mailed Molina, CPLA chair, led a splinter CPLA group, but he now commands a Unified CPLA in association with Corazon Cortel, Balweg's widow. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Mayor under fire for turning over school to N. Vizcaya town

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—Mayor Raymundo Celino of Bokod town came under fire this week from education and provincial officials after he turned over an elementary school in his town to the local government of nearby Kayapa, Nueva Vizcaya.

The provincial board called Celino's decision to transfer the Naswak Elementary School "inappropriate," saying it was done without due course and did not pass through proper channels.

But the absence of official documents that would prove the school's transfer tied the hands of the provincial board in condemning Celino's move and slapping him with administrative sanctions.

Naswak is situated in Bokod's Barangay Ekip, hence, the school had been supervised by the province and the Department of Education division in Benguet since it was put up 20 years ago.

No business

But Celino is expected to stand pat on the position he has officially reiterated since last year—that the school is actually within Barangay Kabayo in Kayapa and thus, the province has no business maintaining the school and paying the salaries of its three teachers.

Celino earlier said Bokod's cadastral map clearly showed Naswak outside the town. He said the map is the "best legal reference to determine a town's political boundaries."

Kayapa Vice Mayor Tuazon Martinez, in a report published in a local weekly, said Celino turned over the school to Kayapa officials on May 15.

"The transfer is a done deal," Martinez said, adding that Kayapa officials had welcomed the event.

School transfer

Dr. Mary Namuhe, Benguet DepEd division superintendent, said Celino had "absolutely no legal right" to order the school's transfer since such matters are for the education department's central office to decide.

"Only the DepEd national office can authorize a transfer. The DepEd was not even invited to the turnover," Namuhe told the board on Monday.

Celino failed to attend the session due to a prior commitment.

Bokod Vice Mayor Thomas Walles Jr. told the board that the municipal council had not passed any resolution authorizing Celino to move the school out of the town's territory.

'Irregular'

This prompted Board Member Lizo Agpas, a lawyer, to call Celino's decision "irregular," saying "the absence of a town resolution makes the act of the mayor devoid of any legal basis."

The board agreed to pass a resolution asking the DepEd central office to maintain status quo and not to entertain any transaction between Celino and Kayapa Mayor Antonio Dupiano regarding the Naswak Elementary School.

Boundary dispute

"The status quo should be maintained since there is still an unresolved boundary dispute between Kayapa and Bokod," the board said.

Last year, Ekip residents confronted Celino on his position that Naswak is outside Bokod. They said a map issued by the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (Namria) showed that Naswak is within Bokod. *Delmar Cariño, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Baguio launches tree festival to start massive planting bid

BAGUIO CITY—THE ONLY CITY with a law penalizing people for harming trees launched its first tree festival on Saturday to institutionalize a massive tree planting drive at the onset of the rainy season each year.

Mayor Braulio Yaranon and members of the city council led Baguio old timers, village leaders, military volunteers and even sidewalk vendors plant tree saplings around Burnham Park.

Councilor Erdolfo Balajadia, chair of the council committee on environment, said the tree festival strengthens the policy set in an ordinance this year that makes June, July, August and September the summer capital's official "tree planting months."

The festival organized all 128 barangays here to conduct their own tree replenishment drives by planting over 100,000 pine tree saplings on vacant lots, public lands or watersheds in their areas, said Josephine Chan, city architect.

Chan said the city would eventually come up with a system that would penalize villages that would post a low tree survival rate.

Balajadia said the tree festival complements an ordinance passed in 1990 that penalizes people with a five to 20-day prison term or a fine of P800 for nailing or bolting any signboard, advertising placard or information campaign material on trees.

It also prohibits people from tying streamers around tree branches using wires, electric cords or cable television wires.

Councilor Leandro Yangot, festival co-chair, said the activity could also be the moral high ground the city government needs to finally replace a concrete pine tree built on top of Session Road with a living, breathing tree.

The concrete pine tree was built by the Department of Public Works and Highways using funds appropriated by former City Baguio Rep. Bernardo Vergara.

City officials want to plant pine trees along Session Road, which serves as the city's oldest business district, as soon as it can map out a smooth transition with DPWH, Yangot said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

BURIAL GUESTS JOFELLE TESORIO/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

A family proceeds to the burial of slain former vice mayor Ferdinand Batul of Puerto Princesa City aboard a motorcycle. Batul, who hosts a regular radio program critical of some city officials, was one of the most recent victims of attacks on media men, all of them unsolved.

Batangas to recover from 'Caloy' in 2 yrs

BATANGAS CITY—IT WOULD take two years before the province of Batangas fully recovers from losses from crop damages brought by tropical storm "Caloy," provincial agriculturist Virgilio Mendoza said.

Based on a report of the Provincial Agriculture Office (PAO), actual crop damages amounted to about P938 million.

Occupying a land area of 4,200 hectares, mango incurred the biggest loss, amounting to P777 million, followed by banana and coconut with P84 million and P46 million.

Other crops damaged were rice, corn, cassava, citrus, black pepper, tamarind, *santol*, papaya, avocado, *rambutan*, coffee, lanzones, *atis*, *malunggay*, eggplant, bamboo, vegetables and other fruit trees.

Of the 31 municipalities and three cities in the province, actual crop damages in Batangas City was the largest at P318 million.

20-year record

This was the biggest crop damage that a typhoon had brought to Batangas for the past 20 years, Mendoza said.

Under a dry season, banana, mango and *sineguelas* fruits are to be harvested but the typhoon abruptly damaged these fruit trees.

In line with this, the PAO has already requested the Department of Agriculture national office for a tissue culture for banana.

Gasppi Eugenio, provincial planning officer, said it would take 5-7 years to grow a new mango seedling into a tree while coconut and bananas usually take 14 months from planting.

Provincial administrator Ronaldo Geron said it would be hard for the coconut industry to recover in a year and coconut production won't be revived until 2007.

Shift to vegetables

A contractor from Calatagan also reported that he lost P2 million from the typhoon, with him supplying 60 percent of mangoes abroad and 40 percent for local consumption, according to Mendoza.

To temporarily meet the farmers' livelihood needs, the DA has already provided them with vegetable seedlings to be harvested in 45 days.

About 90 percent of fish cages around Taal Lake were also destroyed by the storm.

At least P156 million worth of fish cages were damaged in Agoncillo.

Production of eggs is also expected to decline, Mendoza said.

Lipa City and the town of San Jose supply at least 50 percent of Metro Manila's eggs.

The effects, however, are not long-term, according to Eugenio, since the poultry could recover within three months, compared to the crops damaged. *Marlon Alexander Luistro, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

2 leftists killed in wake

From page A1

ter left in a church donation box.

Human rights and militant groups have blamed the seemingly unstoppable killings of political activists on government security forces, mainly military and paramilitary groups.

Costuna, barangay chair of Balud where the Sunday night killings occurred, was shot in the head, while Macale was shot four times in the chest.

A child's wake

Costuna and Macale were at the wake of Costuna's godchild and having drinks in a cottage about three meters from the house where the dead child lay, when the assassin appeared toward midnight.

"The gunman in a black bonnet shot Macale first in the chest about four times and then shot Captain Costuna in the head at close range," barangay tanod Serafin Solomon said.

The killer fled to the highway, where a motorcycle was parked.

Threatened church workers

Police recovered seven empty shells of an M-16 rifle at the crime scene.

Senior Supt. Pio Manito, Eastern Samar police chief, said police were looking at several angles in connection with the killings.

Of the 228 activists killed according to the INQUIRER tally, 96 were Bayan Muna members. Costuna was the 10th Bayan Muna member killed in Eastern Visayas.

'Can't bring down Arroyo'

Karapatan said that besides Respicio, who is assigned at the Iglesia Filipina Independiente's St. Jerome Cathedral, the other Nueva Ecija church workers who had received death threats were Pastor Virgilio Perido Sr. and his daughter, Pastor Beatriz Perido of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, and Respicio's secretary Angelina Hasa.

It said the typewritten letter containing the death threat to Respicio warned the priest to "stop organizing the people."

"You stop. You can't bring down President Arroyo. We might as well kill each other," the letter said in Filipino.

Hasa got a similar letter with instructions not to follow Respicio's orders "if she wanted to live longer."

Daughter Aprilyn

Virgilio Perido told a Karapatan fact-finding group that soldiers from the Army's 48th Infantry Battalion visited his house on May 27-29.

He said the troops asked him to surrender his daughter, Aprilyn, an urban poor organizer.

They also purportedly said the pastor's daughters were in the military's order of battle for being alleged NPA supporters.

Grim choice

He said the troops were led by a First Lieutenant Taglinawan.

Karapatan said that when Perido refused, the officer warned him. "Which do you prefer? You surrender them or you get to learn later that your daughters are dead? You and other members of your family will be dragged into this. Your reputation as a pastor will be ruined," Perido quoted the lieutenant as saying.

Lt. Col. Joselito Kakilala, 48th IB commander, denied that his men had threatened the Peridos.

"They were negotiating for the surrender of Aprilyn who is an active NPA armed regular," Kakilala told the INQUIRER.

Palparan denial

The soldiers also purportedly told Perido that their commander, 7th Infantry Division chief Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, had given them two weeks to work out the surrender.

Karapatan said the soldiers claimed that Palparan was going to "personally take necessary action against them" if the pastors did not yield Aprilyn.

Palparan confirmed to the INQUIRER that he had told the soldiers to "convince" relatives of the rebels to surrender Aprilyn. He denied directing his men to kill those who did not cooperate.

Heat of surveillance

Two other people were reported feeling the heat of government surveillance.

Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas secretary general Danilo Ramos of Bulacan said a police officer had been monitoring his movements.

"I am being monitored by this man, Christopher Artuz of the Philippine National Police, who has been looking for me since May 2, selling all sorts of stuff from crabs to slippers and asking my barrio mates where I was," Ramos said in a statement.

The office of PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao confirmed a PO1 Christopher Artuz was with the PNP, assigned to a group in charge of maintaining Camp Crame. Pagdilao could not be reached for further comment.

One of about 50 people facing charges of rebellion, Anakpawis party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano, also accused the military of shadowing his lawyer, Jobert Pahilga.

Two men on a motorcycle had been seen tailing Pahilga in his neighborhood "and even in his court hearings," Mariano said.

Pahilga is also a lawyer of farm workers at Hacienda Luisita and is involved in other land cases involving big landlords.

Sison's claim

In a teleconference with local media yesterday, Communist Party of the Philippines founder Jose Ma. Sison accused Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and the members of the Cabinet oversight committee on internal security of directing the killings and abduction of leftist activists.

"(President Macapagal-Arroyo) is already the puppet of the generals in her Cabinet. She has no choice but to follow their lead because Ermita knows the wrongdoings committed by Gloria in the elections," Sison said from his exile in the Netherlands.

Sison was apparently referring to allegations that Ms Arroyo had rigged the results of the 2004 presidential election, which she has denied.

In a statement, Luis Jalandoni, chair of the CPP-led National Democratic Front panel in the stalled peace talks with the government, drew a parallel between what he said was the use of motorcycle-riding assassins against Vietnamese nationalists during the Vietnam War and what was happening in the Philippines.

Just calling attention

Jalandoni said Ermita was with John Negroponte, currently the US intelligence chief, in Vietnam during the war.

Ermita was at a meeting and could not be reached for comment. But he had previously dismissed similar allegations by Jalandoni.

Speaking on radio last week, Ermita said: "That NDF official probably had nothing to say about it, and probably he just wanted to call attention."

"But you don't have to believe those kinds of statements from those kinds of people ..." *With reports from Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk; and Luige A. del Puerto, Philip C. Tubeza, Norman Bordadora and Christine O. Avendaño in Manila*

'Nicole' admitted to 'sex,' says US probe report

From page A1

terviewed by NCIS. He said she only told him that that 'we had sex' and there was no mention of rape," Justiniano told reporters off-court.

Evalyn Ursua, a lawyer for the woman, said Beltz would continue his testimony later this week, during which other US Navy investigators were expected to testify about Smith's statement admitting he had consensual sex with "Nicole."

Ursua said she was given a copy of the statement by Navy investigators.

"He had admitted that he had sex, that's important. He says it was consensual, but that's his claim," Ursua told The Associated Press.

In the hearing, Beltz was also made to read passages quoting Timoteo Soriano Jr., driver of the hired van where the alleged rape took place.

Girls for sale

On the night Soriano picked up Nicole and Smith from the Neptune Bar in Subic, the bar's security guard told the US Marines in the van that they should see him if they wanted to "get" girls at a cheaper price.

This was because the girls "in here" usually fetched P6,000 per client but the guard could drive the rate down to P3,000, Soriano said, as quoted in the NCIS report cited by Beltz.

The guard, who Soriano said even asked the Americans for a tip, was not identified—but the passage was apparently referring to Gerald Muyot, the prosecution witness before Beltz.

Previous hearings established that Muyot was the only guard posted at Neptune's entrance at the time and that he saw Soriano's van on the night it was used to pick up Nicole and Smith.

Basis for case

Beltz said the NCIS report would be used by the Okinawa-based US Marine commander of Smith et al. as a basis for any case they may face under US military law. Any legal action by the Marine high command has been "held in abeyance" pending the outcome of the case in the Philippines, he explained.

He also recalled interviewing Soriano regarding the rape case with the aid of an interpreter on Nov. 16, or 15 days after the alleged incident, at the Century Park Hotel in Manila.

Beltz said a Filipino woman had acted as an "intermediary" for Soriano when he contacted the US Embassy and that this woman was present at the interview. The US official, however, maintained that he never got the woman's name.

SSGT. Chad Carpentier and Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith arrive at the Makati City Hall where the rape case against them and two other US Marines is being heard in court. PDI PHOTO/ERIK ARAZAS

Aside from the interview, Soriano provided NCIS a sketch of where the complainant and Marines were seated in the van, he added.

Defense lawyers also sought a demonstration of how Smith "loaded" the complainant into the van on the night of the incident.

Judge Benjamin Pozon of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 139 said in court yesterday that he would subpoena the Starex van where the alleged rape took place.

The green van would be brought to court on Friday.

The US Marines had rented the van and used it during their furlough after the RP-US war games "Talon Vision." It was driven by Soriano, who claimed to have witnessed the alleged crime in the van, only to recant later.

Reenactment

Defense lawyers also requested a reenactment—based on Muyot's testimony—of how Smith opened the van's door while carrying the drunk complainant on his back, and how he loaded her onto the vehicle.

The prosecution had presented Muyot and Tomas Corpuz Jr., security guards at the Neptune Bar at the Subic Freeport. They were the first pair of witnesses to prove that at the time of the incident "Nicole" was too drunk to have consented to sex.

Muyot, who was posted outside the bar on the night of the incident, had testified to seeing Smith carrying a barely conscious "Nicole" piggyback between 11 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. on Nov. 1 last year.

A little more than three hours later, the complainant would return to the bar looking for the Marines she alleged had raped her.

Nicole in tears

Defense lawyers grilled Muyot for more than two hours, as they attempted to quash his credibility. Muyot was asked why he failed to record in his logbook the unusual events he noticed while manning his post on the evening of Nov. 1, even while he managed to jot them down on a small piece of paper.

"Since I was not sure of my suspicion that it would lead to that situation [the alleged rape], I just wrote it on a piece of paper," said Muyot, under Justiniano's questioning.

Muyot had testified that on the night of the incident, his suspicions were aroused when Smith suddenly told him, "She's with me, we're gonna go now," as the accused was about to load the complainant into the van.

At one point during Muyot's testimony, Nicole broke down in tears. *With an AP report*

A year after 'Garci,' GMA on solid footing–Bunye

From page A1

"The political noise has subsided and you can see from the reaction even from the opposition that many of them fear that the (second) impeachment will be futile," he said.

In the year just past, Ms Arroyo not only had to go through the embarrassment of having to say "I am sorry" on television over allegations she conspired with former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano to cheat in the 2004 elections, she also had to face the mass resignation of some of her most trusted Cabinet secretaries (the Hyatt 10), an impeachment complaint in Congress, and dozens of street rallies and congressional probes.

"With less political noise, the President can really concentrate on the more substantive things that need to be done. I believe we are making significant progress and the fruit of that is the latest economic results," said Bunye.

Gravitating toward her

Economic growth is better this year than last year (gross domestic product was up 5.5 percent in the first quarter this year versus 4.2 percent last year), the peso is 3 percent higher than it was last year (52.75 to the dollar from 54.58 in June 5 last year), and the stock market is up 12 percent at 2,304.41 yesterday from 2,051.04 last year.

Francis Chua, president of the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce Inc., said: "More of the public are gravitating toward her due to her successful economic program."

At the Newsmakers Forum, Bunye just smiled when asked if the end of the political noise was the reason the President was back to her "taray" ways as typified by her public scolding of education officer in charge Fe Hidalgo last week over overcrowded classrooms.

WIRETAP RECORDING
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700
ALTERED

FILE photo shows Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye presenting the supposed altered and original CD copies of the wiretapped conversations between President Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano to journalists in Malacañang. PDI PHOTO

"This is one instance where you see a President who is very focused on what needs to be done, and who sometimes gets impatient, but we're grateful that the acting secretary of education reacted in a professional way," Bunye said.

"What is important is that the concerns of the President had been conveyed quite emphatically and I think it's time to just move forward."

Bunye did not dispute an observation put forward in the forum by publisher Tony Lopez, who said: "She's so confident that 'I don't have to play Mrs. Nice anymore and I can be *taray* once again because I eliminated all my enemies—one died and one is in prison.'"

No fear

Bunye said: "The President has nothing to fear and we believe that the President stands on solid ground but we would appreciate it if we would not try to rock the boat, especially since we're already doing well as far as the economy is concerned.

"Any moves that would tend to rock the boat might affect the current business confidence, which is on the rise," he added.

Most challenging move

Being on more solid footing now than a year ago, Ms Arroyo "is prepared to make tough decisions, maybe unpopular decisions, to see to it that economic programs are really implemented," Bunye said.

He said Ms Arroyo's most challenging move in the past 12 months was to push for the value-added tax reform, which expanded VAT coverage to include oil, power and professionals and raised the rate from 10 percent to 12 percent.

"At the start, that (VAT reforms) were very unpopular and we felt like [we were] selling refrigerators to Eskimos but that passed eventually and the international community recognized that the President really made tough decisions," Bunye said.

"The tough decisions are now (producing) dividends. Now the important thing is to plow back the effects of this economic reform so that it would be felt at the household level."

Most unpopular in history

The strengthening of the peso, the surge in the stock market and the new high in investor confidence have been traced to the fiscal reforms the President initiated in the last 12 months.

While Ms Arroyo had been portrayed in surveys as the most unpopular President in the country's history, Bunye pointed out that she was the "most effective because she has delivered the results."

"It's only now that we're achieving these very good economic numbers and we have so many private companies making profit under this administration so I would say that the economic and business policies of the President, which are one of her strongest points, are working," Bunye said.

Bunye said Ms Arroyo would want to be remembered for her fiscal and political reforms when "she steps out of office in 2010."

He said Ms Arroyo was intent on serving out her full term until 2010 and that succeeding in changing the Constitution would just be a "bonus."

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Editor **Ester G. Dipasupil**

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NCRPO gets ready for disaster scenarios

Quick response teams to be set up in all police districts

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION POLICE office (NCRPO) wants the public to know that it CARES.

Metro Manila Police Chief Vidal Querol has drawn up the "Contingency Actions and Response during Emergency Situations" (CARES) plan in case a nuclear, chemical, biological or radiological (NCBR) disaster occurs in the metropolis.

In a letter of instruction, Querol admitted that the NCRPO did not have a unit which was properly trained to rescue victims of such disasters.

Community-based

He also said that his office did not have the appropriate equipment to carry out rescue operations. Because of these limitations, the CARES plan was formed to "ensure the effective and efficient implementation of Civil Protection Program through an integrated, multi-sectoral and community-based approach in protecting lives and properties," Querol stated.

In times of such emergencies, the NCRPO personnel deployed across Metro Manila will be the front liners in the rescue operations.

Fund support

The Regional Operations Division, on the other hand, will monitor and supervise the police districts in carrying out the plan.

Meanwhile, the Regional Comptrollership Division was tasked to provide the necessary fund support.

Querol also instructed the Police Community Relations Division to designate a family liaison officer who would get in touch with relatives of victims.

Special teams

On the other hand, all police district commanders were directed to organize, develop, equip and mobilize District NCBR Quick Response Teams, which will be immediately deployed to perform "precursory" police functions during a NCBR disaster.

Among their tasks were to isolate contaminated areas and provide assistance to NCBR disaster-capable units during the evacuation of decontaminated areas.

They were also expected to help out in relief operations, traffic management and the investigation and gathering of evidence and the filing of appropriate cases against those responsible for the disaster.

Man kills roommate over toilet use

By DJ Yap

AN ARGUMENT OVER THE USE OF A TOILet led to the killing of a market porter and the wounding of his roommate early yesterday in Quezon City.

Daniel Cunsina, 18, was killed and Alvin Matuguinas, 26, a driver, was hurt after Dennis Federizo, 21, a delivery boy, went into a rage and stabbed them inside their rented room at MC Market, Barangay Balingasa on Edsa.

Initial investigation showed that Federizo was mad at Matuguinas when the latter used the toilet while he was preparing to take a bath at half past midnight, said investigator PO2 Rogelio Basbas Jr.

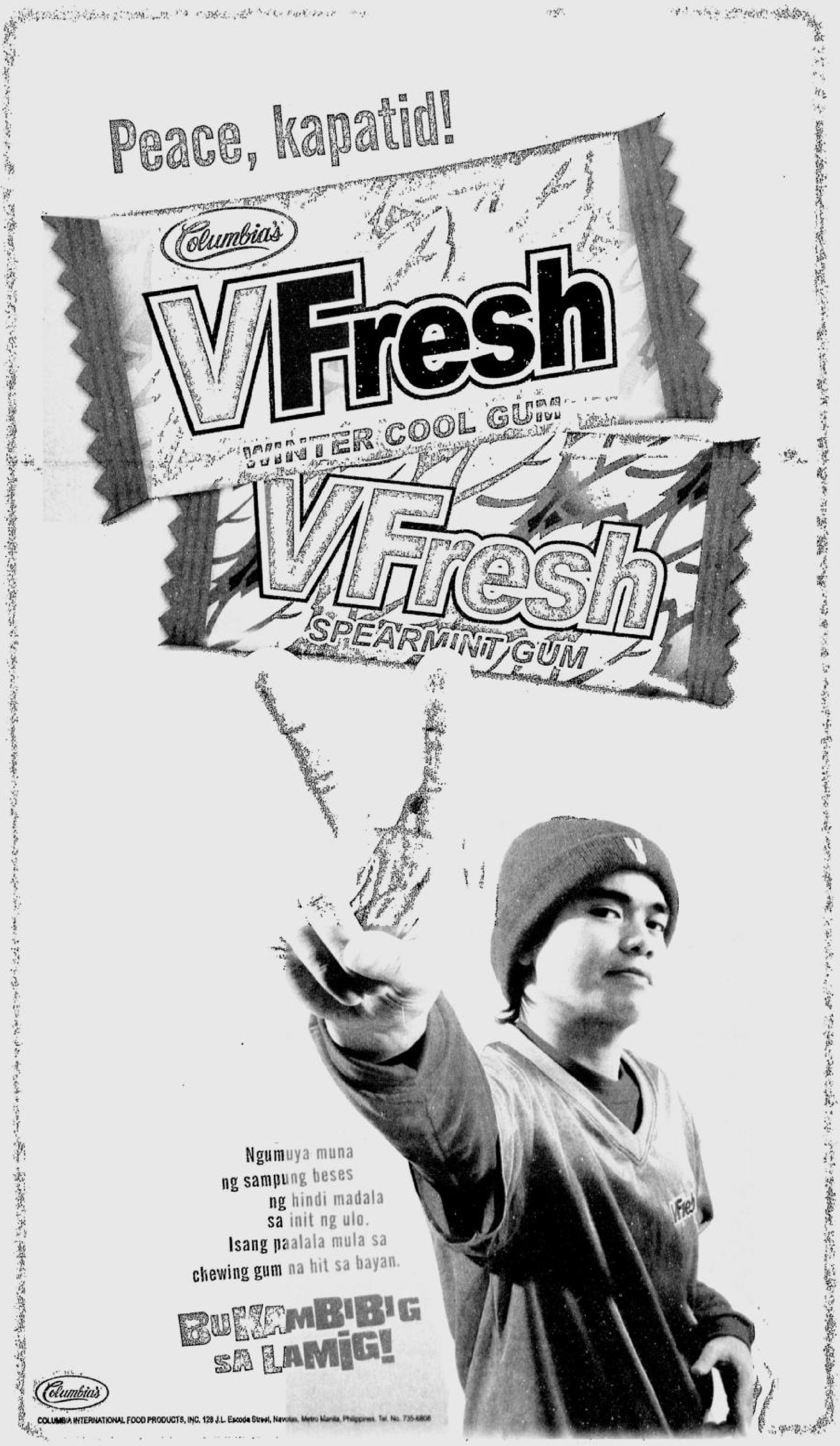
Cunsina might have tried to pacify the two but was himself stabbed in the process, investigators said.

Witness Edwin Ramos told Basbas that he was awakened by the commotion and saw Cunsina holding his bloodied chest, while cursing the suspect.

The two victims were rushed to the Quezon City General Hospital, but Cunsina, who sustained several stab wounds all over the body, died on the way.

Matuguinas is undergoing treatment at the hospital for stab wounds in the neck, police said.

A concerned citizen identified as Joel Calim, turned Federizo over to La Loma Police Station, Basbas said.



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New school year, old problems

By Jocelyn R. Uy, DJ Yap, Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Luige A. del Puerto

CLASSES AT THE TAGUIG NATIONAL High School in Lower Bicutan, the city's oldest school, were called off yesterday even before students could get inside their classrooms.

Dr. Eleanor Abisado, the school principal, sent home the over 2,000 students after more than 100 teachers, students and their parents held a rally demanding her ouster.

The protesters, who gathered at the school quadrangle in front of Abisado's office, accused her of collecting fees from students, in addition to being abusive and inefficient.

"We are calling for her ouster because we have already lost our trust and confidence in her leadership," Bernadette Bautista, the president of the school faculty, told the INQUIRER. Bautista alleged that Abisado had collected P50 each from the students before their report cards were released last March.

The teachers also accused her of lacking school management skills, misappropriating school funds and being indifferent to their welfare and development.

Abisado, however, called the allegations against her "baseless." She said the P50-fee collected from the parents was used to pay for the leadership training members of the student government body had attended in Baguio City.

"That is legal... records will show that their accusations are not true," Abisado told the INQUIRER. She added that the teachers were against her because of the reforms she had instituted since she took over the school in 2003.

Abisado decided to move the opening of classes to Tuesday next week, pending the resolution of the issue against her.

Dr. Ruth Fuentes, Education Supervisor II of the National Capital Region Office, said they would try to resolve the issue so that classes could begin today.

A group of parents also held a rally in front of the East Canumay Elementary School in Valenzuela City to protest against alleged irregularities supposedly committed by the principal.

The city's press information officer, Marither Menia, however, downplayed the incident which she attributed to the graduation fee the school had charged its students.

Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, Northern Police District director, said the rally ended peacefully after protesters agreed to hold a dialogue with district supervisor Alma Bautista.

Close watch

The police will continue to keep a close watch on schools in Metro Manila within the next two to three weeks, as it is during this period that students are most vulnerable to petty criminals, a senior official said yesterday.

"The first two to three weeks from the opening of classes is significant because our students are not yet adjusted during this time," said Director Vidal Querol, National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief. According to him, the opening of classes went smoothly, a situation which he attributed to their preparations as early as a month ago.

But the usual problems about the lack of classrooms, chairs and books cropped up as public elementary and high schools in the metropolis welcomed back students after the summer break.

At the Batasan Hills National High School in Quezon City, seven freshmen had to sit on the floor because of the lack of chairs. But it will not stay that way for long, according to Jose Dichoso Jr., a teacher of more than five years.

In the coming weeks, some of the students will fall sick, a handful will opt not to attend class, and a few will stop going to school altogether, he said. By the time they complete their first year studies, no one will be sitting on that floor anymore, Dichoso predicted.

Classes for sophomores and freshmen at BNHS are held in nine-by-seven meter rooms, ideally suited for 40-50 students. But the classrooms are bisected into two, with each accommodating between 60 and 70 students.

This means that a room intended for 50 students is being occupied by 120. Make that 240, because the classes are also divided into morning and afternoon shifts.

With 9,000 students and 250 teachers, the BNHS is one of the most populated high schools in Quezon City, but student retention is not particularly high, said Dichoso, who teaches Technology and Livelihood Education at the school.

A NEW student at the Payatas Elementary School in Quezon City appears to have overcome the jitters at the first day of classes yesterday.

JOAN BONDOC

At the Potrero Elementary School in Malabon, classes were being held at the library, social hall and even on the school quadrangle.

Earthquake-prone

The Department of Education had earlier declared two school buildings as vulnerable to earthquakes, reducing the number of classrooms that could be used by students.

"We had to reduce the sections and distribute the pupils to other classes, thus increasing the number of students in every class," school principal Norma Guillermo said.

There was also confusion as transfer students and late enrollees showed up on what should have been the first day of classes.

At the Nagpayong Elementary School, one of the biggest elementary schools in Pasig City, only 2,316 students have enrolled as of yesterday.

The school had 5,175 students last year, officials said. They expect to have the same number of students this year.

Transfer students

"Some students had just come back from their provinces while some just chose to enroll on the first day," Pasig City and San Juan Division administrative officer Benjamin Jacosalem said.

There were also a lot of transfer students from private schools who showed up only yesterday to enlist.

"We should already be starting our classes. But what can we do? There are still many late enrollees," Rizal High School principal Josephine Cruz also told the INQUIRER.

From 1993-1999 , her school held the world record for the most number of students, when the average school population was about 25,000.

But a few years ago, its five satellite schools finally became independent schools, shattering its world record.

There were more than 8,500 students enrolled last year, making the school the biggest in the city. There were about 8,000 enrollees as of yesterday, Cruz said, adding that he expected the number to go up within the week.

The school has 10 buildings which house more than 180 classrooms. The average class size for the regular sections is 50 while special science sections accommodate up to 45 students per room.

With Nancy C. Carvajal, Tina G. Santos, Tarra V. Quismundo

A MAN raises his fist in defiance as he is arrested by a policeman, along with several other militants, for holding a rally near Malacañang to protest what they said was the low priority given by the government to education.

ERIK ARAZAS

10 protesters nabbed near Malacañang gate

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THEY SPENT THE FIRST DAY OF school in a different institution.

A group of students and out-of-school youth were arrested by operatives of the Manila Police District (MPD) while holding a rally outside Malacañang yesterday morning.

The protesters were identified as Chester Amparo, Michael dela Cruz, Lanie Ramirez and Francisco Vergara—students of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines and members of Youth for Nationalism and Democracy. Also arrested were Bobby de Guzman, Joseph Inocando, Arman Rivera, Joey Estopin and two minors.

They were brought to the MPD Headquarters General Assignments Section for investigation.

"We are strictly implementing the no-permit, no-rally policy in the city," MPD director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong said in an interview.

According to an initial police report, the students were arrested at around 10:30 a.m. yesterday after they failed to produce a rally permit.

"We just wanted to let the administration know that they should make education instead of debt payment the top priority," Amparo told reporters in an interview.

The YND members were nabbed while distributing leaflets to passersby near Gate 7 of the Malacañang complex, police said.

"Illegal assembly charges will be filed against the protesters," Bulaong said.

METROBRIEFS

Students cautioned vs buying street food

PASUKAN NAH!

TWENTY-FOUR-year-old Emman woke up early morning yesterday, ready for the first day of school. Emman, however, is not a student. He sells fried chicken innards or "isaw" to students at the Rizal High School, Pasig City's biggest public high school. During school days, Emman, who has been selling street food to the high schoolers for three years now, earns at least P800 daily. Just a word of caution from school officials, though: Pasig-San Juan Division Schools administrative officer Benjamin Jacosalem has warned students against eating street foods. "Our schools have canteens. We will not allow vendors inside the schools," Jacosalem said. ***Edson C. Tandoc Jr.***

Emma Endriga; 59

EMMA Villaruel Endriga, wife of Quezon City Treasurer Victor B. Endriga, died of cancer on June 3 at the age of 59. She is survived by her husband, children Carmela and Enrico Honrado, Cherry and Roland Valerio, Victor Jr. and Cathy Endriga, grandchildren Erica, Eunice, Eliza, Rachel and Ronic. Her body lies at the Sanctuario de San Antonio, Makati City. Interment will be on Thursday, June 8, at the Manila South Cemetery in Makati City.

Earthquake drills, first aid seminars for Caloocan schools

By Nancy C. Carvajal

FOLLOWING THE RECENT EARTHquake that killed thousands in Indonesia, Caloocan Mayor Enrico Echiverri yesterday said he wants teachers and students in his city to undergo training on first aid to prepare them for any calamity.

"Apart from the usual earthquake and fire drills, students and teachers must be taught how to deal with any calamity with the least casualty or injury," Echiverri said.

He vowed to give priority to his plan because "schools are where most of the students are, and their safety is paramount."

Echiverri said the seminar would be conducted in different public schools in the city with the assistance of local agencies like the City Health Office and the Bureau of Fire Department.

Division of City Schools Superintendent Elizabeth Manalo had been tasked to supervise the program, the mayor added.

"The training will begin as soon as proper coordination with the concerned agencies has been made," Echiverri said.

To show that the city government is serious in its preparation for any disaster, the city's engineering department has started going around and inspecting buildings which could pose a danger to its occupants," the mayor added.

"We have started inspecting buildings, including dormitories, to check if they comply with the building code," he said.

The siblings are at it again

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE SIBLINGS VICKY AND Tomas Toh have not stopped their activities after all.

They no longer use Sammy Lee, who was arrested by the police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) upon orders from Malacañang.

The Tohs are allegedly using a different broker known among Bureau of Customs employees as "Ahan."

Ahan reportedly facilitates the release of 300 to 400 containers every week from customs bonded warehouses, according to my customs sources.

Shipments of highly dutiable resin, tiles, general merchandise, clothes and shoes are reportedly misdeclared by the Tohs as raw materials to be exported back to their points of origin.

Usually, imported raw materials are placed in a customs bonded warehouse, taken into factories and made into finished products. These finished products are then sent back to the countries where the raw materials came from.

Taxes and duties are not paid on these raw materials since the country earns dollars from the export of the products. The country also benefits from the manpower used in making the products.

In the case of the Tohs, the government loses since the products taken out from the customs bonded warehouse are not raw materials but already finished products that are sold in the country.

The products withdrawn by the Tohs from the customs bonded warehouses were misrepresented as raw materials and were therefore not imposed duties and taxes, according to my customs sources.

As usual, the Tohs are using the name of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo in their smuggling activities, my sources said.

The smuggling activities of the Tohs were exposed in this space last January, an exposé that led to a Senate inquiry.

The exposé caused the breakup of my friendship with Mr. Arroyo.

"Mon, Vicky and Tomas lay low during the Senate investigation. But they're back in harness," said one of the sources.

The Tohs are using these firms as fronts for smuggling, according to my customs sources: Itahan Footwear Corp., Winklers Manufacturing and Spyca International Inc.

My customs sources said that my exposé two months ago somehow contributed to the increased revenue collection at the customs bureau.

Importers were forced to pay duties and taxes on their goods since Sammy Lee, alleged broker of the Tohs, had been rendered inutile. Most importers used Lee as their broker, and Lee made it appear that the goods he was facilitating also belonged to the Tohs.

* * *

I'm sure President Macapagal-Arroyo will again fly into a rage after she reads this item. My Palace spy said the President hit the ceiling when she read about the Tohs' smuggling activities.

As the President and Mike Arroyo's arch critic, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, would say: "*Alam ba ni Mrs. Toh?*

* * *

I nearly fell off my chair when I read the INQUIRER's front page story about one of the motives for the bomb attack on Batangas Gov. Armando Sanchez.

Senior Supt. Ricardo Padilla, head of a special team investigating the attempt on Sanchez's life, was quoted as saying that the governor's crackdown on the illegal numbers game "jueteng" was being looked into.

Even Chief Supt. Prospero Noble, police chief of Region 4, was quoted as saying in reply to the jueteng angle: "*Malayo ang angulo na 'yan. Hindi naman si* governor *nag-papa-jueteng* (That's a far-fetched angle. The governor does not allow jueteng operations)." Oh, yeah?

Environmental degradation worsening in China

BEIJING—CHINA WARNED ON MONDAY that its goals for economic growth were in direct conflict with environmental protection and said degradation was worsening despite official efforts to curb pollution.

A paper released by the Cabinet on World Environment Day came amid rising public concern about smoggy skies and toxic spills that are poisoning rivers and drinking water, despite government pledges to clean up in time for the 2008 Olympics.

"The conflict between environment and development is becoming ever more prominent," the paper said.

"Relative shortage of resources, fragile ecology and insufficient environmental capacity are becoming critical problems hindering China's development."

China's Communist Party has promised to balance economic development with environmental safeguards, after a year in which sandstorms that coated the capital in dust and a chemical spill that poisoned a major river thrust its record on pollution into the global spotlight.

But economic growth has been averaging about 10 percent annually, far greater than the 7.5-percent growth rates on which the government's targets for pollution reduction are based.

"If the economy is growing too rapidly, environmental resources will be faced with tremendous pressures and therefore such development is not sustainable," Zhu Guangyao, a vice minister at the State Environmental Protection Administration, told a news conference.

Considerations of land and other resources would play a more prominent role in the approval process for large-scale projects, Zhu said. Such projects have sometimes led to riots over environmental pollution in recent years.

Zhu said implementing the central government's guidelines would also be a challenge for local officials who are accustomed to being judged on growth above all else and are fearful of the economic impact of tighter environmental controls.

"Local environmental NGOs do not dare criticize local governments for their unscientific decisions," Zhu said. "Some local governments are reluctant to implement or are even working against environmental laws."

To mark World Environment Day, in Beijing, where 1,000 new vehicles take to the road every day, a quarter of a million people pledged to leave their cars at home, state media reported.

But in the city of more than 16 million, there was little discernable impact on the capital's smoggy skies.

And in Shanghai, China's richest city, the local environment bureau was quoted as saying that companies that pollute would find it harder to get loans as their green credentials would be linked to their creditworthiness.

But China's enforcement is still dogged by under-funding and a lack of resources, a senior SEPA official was quoted as saying on the ministry's website (www.zhb.gov.cn).

"Investment in ecological protection is inadequate," the official said. "We need to adopt more vigorous measures." *Reuters*

A CHINESE model shows off an environment-themed costume during World Environment Day in Beijing, June 4. AFP

Beijing 'no-car' day fails to get out of first gear

BEIJING—BEIJING LAUNCHED ITS INAUGURAL "no-car day" Monday to combat the city's worsening pollution woes, but traffic was as grid-locked as ever and the gray air remained dense with exhaust fumes.

More than 250,000 drivers have committed to leaving their cars at home one day each month, organizers said as the voluntary campaign that is based on a similar French program got under way on World Environment Day.

However, there were few signs of any significant decrease in traffic on Monday, with drivers either saying they were not aware of the campaign or simply could not do without their vehicles.

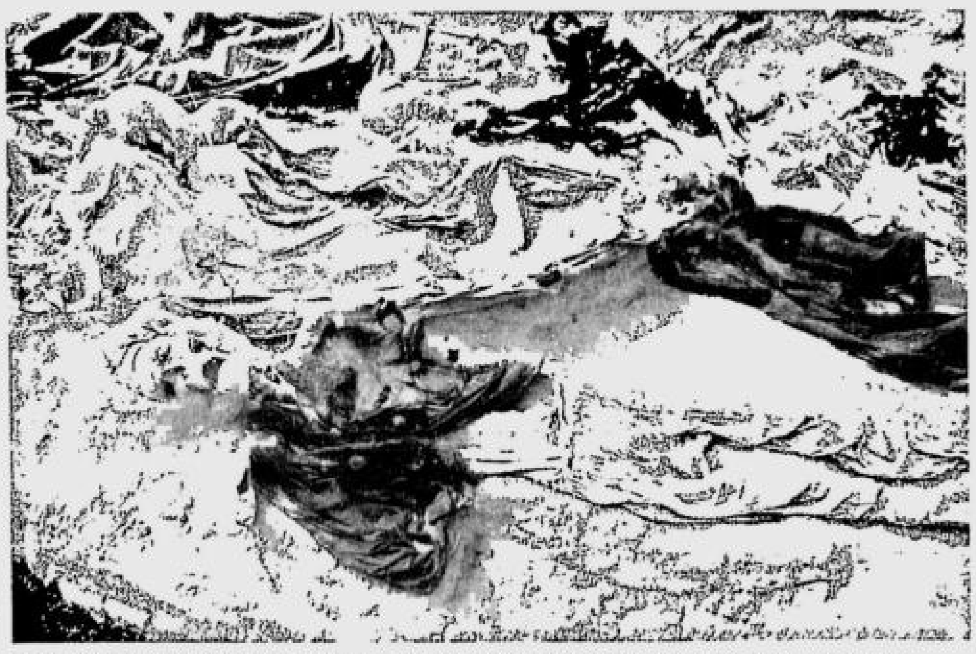
"I heard about no-car day on the radio but I had to drive because I need to run some errands later today," said a manager with a foreign company surnamed Lu, who drives a Volkswagen Jetta, in Beijing's central business district.

A parking lot attendant surnamed Lin who has worked at the same car park for seven years said she had seen just three or four fewer private vehicles than normal arrive on Monday.

The 250,000 drivers who had committed to not driving represent just under 10 percent of the 2.6 million cars that are on Beijing's roads.

But even if all of those drivers actually did not drive to work once a month, that benefit would be quickly be eliminated, with government figures showing an additional 1,000 cars are taking to Beijing's roads each week.

By the time of the Olympics in 2008, the government estimates there will be 3.5 million cars in Beijing. *AFP*



HUMAN skeletons lie on a mass grave after they were unearthed a few days ago by forensic experts in the desert south of Baghdad. REUTERS

Bones in desert speak of terror under Saddam

By John F. Burns

ON THE EDGE OF THE ASH SHAM DESERT, Iraq—Among experts on the American-led team seeking the country's mass graves who came to an escarpment in Iraq's western desert last month, the skeletal remains lying face-up at the rear of the tangled grave have been given a name—the Blue Man—that speaks for a sorrowful familiarity developed by some of those who work with victims of mass murder.

But more than his blue shirt, and his cream-and-blue striped trousers, what distinguishes the remains is the way they speak for the terror of death under Saddam Hussein. The man was thrown backward by automatic weapons fire, his eyes blindfolded and his arms tied behind his back, his skull jerked upward at the neck, his fleshless mouth gaping, his two rows of teeth stretched far apart, as though in a primal scream.

Together, in the late winter of 1991, at least 28 men were executed here, crowded together in a pit their killers scraped with a backhoe from the desert floor. Rounded up along the alleyways of their native city, they were forced aboard a bus or truck and driven out along an isolated highway.

After barely half an hour's journey, the grim caravan turned off down a bumpy track, halting just far enough into the desert for gunfire to be muffled from passing traffic.

The end would have come quickly, the forensic experts said, victims stumbling out of the vehicle, herded into the pit, then pushed forward into a shallow cut not much wider or longer than a stretch limousine. At the last moment, judging by the pile-up of bodies, the victims surged backward, perhaps in terror at the sound of rifles being readied for fire.

Among the bodies, the experts have located at least 80 spent cartridges from Kalashnikov rifles that were the weapon of choice among the killers of Saddam's secret police. *NYT*

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By Webmaster Raymond Steinbacher, and the research staff at Green Tree Press, Inc.

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

GARCIA greeting supporters in Lima June 4. REUTERS

Garcia in stunning comeback

Former Peru president disgraced 16 years ago wins new term

LIMA, PERU—SIXTEEN YEARS AFTER HIS PRESIDENCY ended in economic collapse and heightened guerrilla violence, Alan Garcia was elected president again on Sunday, completing one of Latin America's most astonishing political resurrections.

With 77 percent of the vote tabulated, electoral authorities said Garcia had captured more than 55 percent of the vote versus 44 percent for his opponent, Ollanta Humala, an upstart nationalist who promised to redistribute the country's wealth.

Garcia, 57, who once faced corruption charges and ended his first presidency in disgrace, sounded a note of contrition during a spellbinding victory speech before a throng of supporters.

"A new path to victory and responsibility has been open to the Apristas as a result of the generosity of the people and the will of God," he said, referring to his party, the Apra. "No one can reach power if you do not accept and open your heart before God and admit the errors that you are guilty of."

He added, "I do not want an ephemeral victory."

Voters had seen the race as an unappealing choice between a former president whose first administration had been an unmitigated disaster and a former army officer who once led a military rebellion. But voters saw Garcia as the lesser of two evils.

"It is sad, but what can we do?" said Victor Rondoy, 48, an electrical engineer, moments after voting for Garcia. "At least Garcia will be more democratic."

Garcia's return is one of the most startling in a region where former presidents, even those who left in disgrace, have returned to power years later. His presidency from 1985 to 1990 was characterized by four-digit inflation, food scarcity, rampant corruption and growing violence by the rebel group Shining Path.

Humala, 43, the latest in a line of populist leaders who have surged across the region, criticized foreign multinationals for exploiting Peru's vast mineral resources and railed against corrupt politicians.

Though the administration of the outgoing president, Alejandro Toledo, had registered strong economic growth, Humala was able to capitalize on widespread disenchantment because many Peruvians believed that the wealth that had been generated had failed to trickle down. *NYT*

New Medicaid rules to exclude US illegals

WASHINGTON—THE BUSH ADministration plans this week to issue strict new standards requiring more than 50 million low-income people on Medicaid to prove they are US citizens by showing passports or birth certificates and a limited number of other documents.

The new standards follow a tussle with Congress. Federal health officials had considered giving states broad discretion to accept affidavits in place of official documents. But House Republicans complained, and the administration backed off, allowing affidavits "only in rare circumstances."

The requirements, which take effect on July 1, carry out a law signed by President Bush on Feb. 8.

They vividly illustrate how concern about illegal immigration is affecting domestic social welfare policy. The purpose of the law was to conserve federal money for US citizens, reducing the need for states to cut Medicaid benefits or limit eligibility.

Gov. Rick Perry of Texas won enthusiastic applause at a state Republican convention on Friday when he vowed to beef up border security and said, "Texas will start requiring every Medicaid applicant to verify that they are in the country legally in order to receive benefits."

But officials in some other states and advocates for the poor said the new requirements could cause hardship for children, older Americans and poor people born at home in rural areas who never received birth certificates. Children account for about half of Medicaid recipients. People 65 and older account for about 10 percent.

Jennifer M. Ng'andu, a health policy specialist at the National Council of La Raza, a Hispanic rights group, said: "Eligible people will be shut out of Medicaid. The documentation requirements will cause confusion about eligibility and will put up barriers to enrollment."

In general, Medicaid is available only to US citizens and to certain "qualified aliens." Before the new standards, in many states, people who declared they were citizens did not have to do anything to support the claim.

But in a letter being sent this week to state officials, the Bush administration says, "Self-attestation of citizenship and identity is no longer an acceptable practice."

In the letter to state Medicaid directors, the administration says, "An applicant or recipient who fails to cooperate with the state in presenting documentary evidence of citizenship may be denied or terminated" from the program. *NYT*

MIKAYLA Coenen, who is receiving treatment for leukemia in Fargo, N.D., has been making greeting cards in her hospital room. She charges $1 for a big card, 50 cents for a smaller one and donates some of the money she earned to charity and to parents with kids in the hospital. AP

'Daggy' Manilow may drive away loud cars

SYDNEY—SICK AND TIRED OF souped-up cars with loud engines and pulsing music? Barry Manilow may be the answer.

Officials in one Sydney district have decided to pipe the American crooner's music over loudspeakers in an attempt to rid streets and car parks of "car hoons" whose antisocial cars and loud music annoy residents and drive customers from businesses.

Following a successful experiment where Bing Crosby music was used to drive teenage loiterers out of an Australian shopping center several years ago, Rockdale councilors believe Manilow is so uncool it might just work.

Councilor Bill Saravinovski said local authorities plan to install a loudspeaker and pipe in Manilow music, interspersed with classical pieces, over a car park favored by car "hoons," or hooligans.

"There are restaurants nearby and people can't park in the car park because they're intimidated by these hoons," Saravinovski told The Daily Telegraph newspaper on Monday.

"Daggy music is one way to make the hoons leave an area because they can't stand the music," he said.

The Oxford Concise Australian Dictionary defines "daggy" as unfashionable, or lacking style, even eccentric or stupid. *Reuters*

'Smart bombs' combo future of cancer cure

ATLANTA—USING COMBINATIONS OF "SMART bomb" cancer drugs that target specific proteins and avoid the indiscriminate cell destruction of chemotherapy may be the wave of the future for cancer patients, experts say.

Early studies show that combining targeted treatments such as Genentech Inc.'s breast cancer drug Herceptin with GlaxoSmithKline Plc.'s experimental treatment Tykerb, may be helpful in patients who do not respond to Herceptin alone, said Dr. Jose Baselga, chief of medical oncology service at Vall d'Hebron University Hospital in Barcelona, Spain.

Targeted therapies act as smart bombs by crippling or knocking out deadly cancer cells while leaving healthy cells intact, unlike the scorched-earth approach of chemotherapy, which kills both healthy and unhealthy cells.

Using Herceptin and Tykerb together is just one of many drug combinations that could improve on results seen with existing targeted therapies such as ImClone Systems Inc.'s colon cancer drug Erbitux and OSI Pharmaceuticals Inc.'s lung cancer drug Tarceva.

"All the chemical models suggest that combinations will be superior, though the data still has to prove it," Baselga said at the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

This weekend, investigators at the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology in Atlanta released data from a midstage trial on lung cancer patients of Pfizer Inc.'s kidney cancer drug Sutent. Now they are planning to test it in combination with Tarceva.

"Most of us feel that except for in very rare instances, tumors are driven by multiple pathways and therefore it makes sense that a multi-targeted approach makes most sense," said Mark Socinski, associate professor of medicine at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Researchers say they now also plan to test combinations of Novartis AG's drug Gleevec with Bristol-Myers Squibb Co.'s Sprycel in chronic myelogenous leukemia. A US advisory panel recently recommended that Sprycel be approved. *Reuters*

US sweetens offer to Iran, diplomats say

VIENNA—THE UNITED STATES has offered to lift some of its trade sanctions against Iran as part of a package of benefits the EU will deliver to get Tehran to guarantee it will not make nuclear weapons, diplomats told AFP Sunday.

The United States is proposing "lifting sanctions partially, not only waiving sanctions but actually lifting them," in an agreement to be worked out in multilateral talks that would start once Iran suspended uranium enrichment, said a senior Western diplomat, who requested anonymity.

Washington, which considers Iran a sponsor of terrorism and now fears it is covertly developing nuclear weapons, has since the mid-1990s banned most US trade and investment with the Islamic Republic.

Lifting sanctions would allow sales to Iran of things like agricultural technology and commercial planes to replace the country's dilapidated fleet.

US officials have said they want to keep the details of the proposal secret in order to avoid the appearance of threatening Iran.

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Sunday that his country, which claims its nuclear work is part of a peaceful program to generate electricity, would not buckle in the face of "threats and bribes."

"You threaten Iran. You say you want to direct energy in the region. If you make a single mistake about Iran, the supply of energy will definitely be put in serious risk," Khamenei said of the United States. *AFP*

BERLIN CARNIVAL

Revelers in colorful costumes dance in the streets of the German capital Berlin June 4. Thousands of people watched the parade of Berlin's ethnic minorities called "Carnival of the Cultures." REUTERS

UK press questions terror raid

LONDON—QUESTIONS WERE RAISED in the British press on Sunday over the circumstances of a huge antiterror raid here two days ago as police questioned two terror suspects, one of whom was shot in the operation.

According to their lawyers, brothers Abul Koyair, 20, and Mohammed Abdul Kahar, 23, vehemently deny any involvement in terrorism after they were arrested during a dawn raid on Friday in Forest Gate, east London.

Kahar, who was shot during the raid, was moved on Sunday from Royal London Hospital to Paddington Green high security police station, where he was expected to face questioning for the first time. However, his lawyer Kate Roxburgh said on Sunday evening he was still too weak.

"Unfortunately because he is on such strong painkillers he could not be interviewed tonight.

"He's very tired. He's feeling sick. He's not especially well, but he is keen to be interviewed and get this over with," she said.

Police have declined to comment on news reports that experts were hunting for evidence of chemical or biological weapons as they continue to search the terraced house.

Neighbors in Forest Gate defended the brothers, who were arrested under the Terrorism Act, describing them as devout Muslims from a Bangladeshi family, and accused police of heavy-handed tactics.

Two hundred and fifty police, some wearing bio-chemical suits and carrying gas masks, on Friday descended on the house which was reportedly being used as a bomb factory.

London Metropolitan Police antiterror chief Peter Clarke said officers had acted on intelligence following weeks of surveillance.

However, the Mail on Sunday questioned whether the massive scale of the raid was justified.

"A tip from an informant, grandiosely described as 'intelligence,' suggested a serious danger," the newspaper said in a leader column. "But it is the manner in which the arrest was carried out that is questionable."

"Were the extraordinary numbers of officers really needed? Was the shooting a justified use of extreme force, or a needless bungle?"

According to The Sunday Times, which cited Scotland Yard sources, there had been "specific intelligence" which suggested that a single bomb overlaid with cyanide was being prepared at the address.

Security services told The Sunday Telegraph that they were searching for a device capable of releasing deadly sarin gas similar to the one that killed 12 people and affected more than 5,000 on the Tokyo subway in 1995. *AFP*

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SPORTS

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Text us your feedback: inquirer sprt name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

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Roles reversed for Pinoy teams in Chess Olympiad

By Roy Luarca

TURIN, ITALY — THEIR roles have been reversed.

It was the Philippine women's team, not the men, which placed higher in the 37th Chess Olympiad at the Olympic Village here.

The Filipinas finally ran out of gas and bowed to the Slovenians, 2.5-0.5, in the 13th and final round Sunday, but still managed to top Group C, which is confined to teams ranked 42nd to 62nd in the 103-women's field.

With a total of 22 points, the Filipinas wound up 24th, their best since the 1988 Thessaloniki Olympiad where a squad composed of WIM Girme Fontanilla, Metropolitan Chess Club head Mila Emperado and WNM Cristina Santos landed 20th.

It was a superb performance for the Filipinas, composed of Woman Fide Master Sheerie Joy Lomibao, Catherine Perena, Sherily Cua and Woman International Beverly Mendoza, who were ranked just 60th at the start of the biennial meet.

The Filipinos, with newly confirmed International Master Oliver Dimakiling yielding to IM Alexander Hilario Takeda Fier on board 4, bowed to the Brazilians, 2.5-1.5, and wound up 44th among a record 146 squads.

Grandmasters Mark Paragua, Eugene Torre and Rogelio Antonio Jr. failed to gain headway and settled for draws on boards 1, 2 and 3, respectively, leaving the fight to Dimakiling in a queen-pawns ending.

The Brazilian, ahead by two pawns, eventually produced a second queen, forcing Dimakiling to resign and throw away the GM norm that should have been his with just a draw.

Against 17th seed Slovenia, only Mendoza was able to draw against WIM Jana Krivec.

Perena, who earned a WIM result, bowed to Woman Grandmaster Anna Muzychuk while Cua, an Olympiad rookie, lost to WGM Ana Srebrnic.

"I'm proud of the girls," said team captain Cesar Caturla. "They did not fear anybody here."

The Filipinas made a big leap from their 48th place finish in the 2004 Calvia Olympiad with the 19-year-old Cua emerging as top scorer with 6.5 points in 11 games. Perena and Mendoza notched 6 points each while Lomibao finished with 3.5 in seven games.

The Filipinos, on the other hand, plummeted from 19th place in Calvia, where they rallied by posting 8.5 points in the last three rounds.

They managed just 6.5 points this time, absorbing a 3-1 loss from the Dutch in round 11, a 2-2 draw with the Swiss in round 12 and that defeat to the Brazilians.

Antonio emerged the men's team's best performer with 7 points in 11 games.

Armenia took the men's crown pulling away with 36 points while China snatched second with 34, following a 2.5-1.5 victory over the Netherlands.

The United States grabbed third with a 3.5-0.5 rout of Norway.

CHESS OLYMPIAD FINAL STANDINGS

MEN: 36— Armenia; 34—China; 33—US, Israel; 32.5—Hungary; 32—Russia, France, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Spain; 31—Czech Rep., Netherlands, Uzbekistan, Georgia, 30.5—Germany, Cuba, Sweden, Moldova, England; 30—Denmark, Poland, Greece, Slovenia, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Romania, Switzerland, Latvia, Australia; 29.5—India, Norway, Brazil, FYROM, Canada, Italy A; 29—Belarus, Serbia and Montenegro, Turkey, Vietnam, Indonesia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Lithuania; 28.5—Slovakia, RP, Ireland, Iceland, Estonia, Mexico, Italy B

WOMEN: 29.5—Ukraine, 28—Russia; 27.5—China; 24.5—US, Hungary, Georgia, Netherlands; 24—Armenia, Slovenia, Czech Rep.; 23.5—Germany, India, Bulgaria, Romania, Vietnam, Cuba, Latvia; 22.5—France, Greece, Slovakia; 22—Lithuania, Turkey, Serbia & Montenegro, RP, Iran

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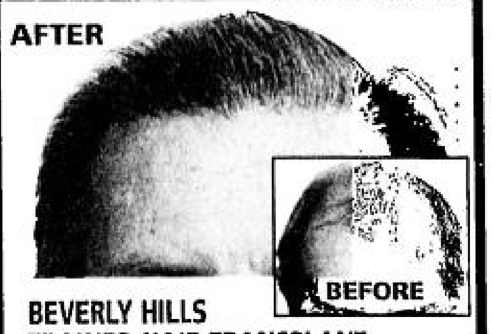

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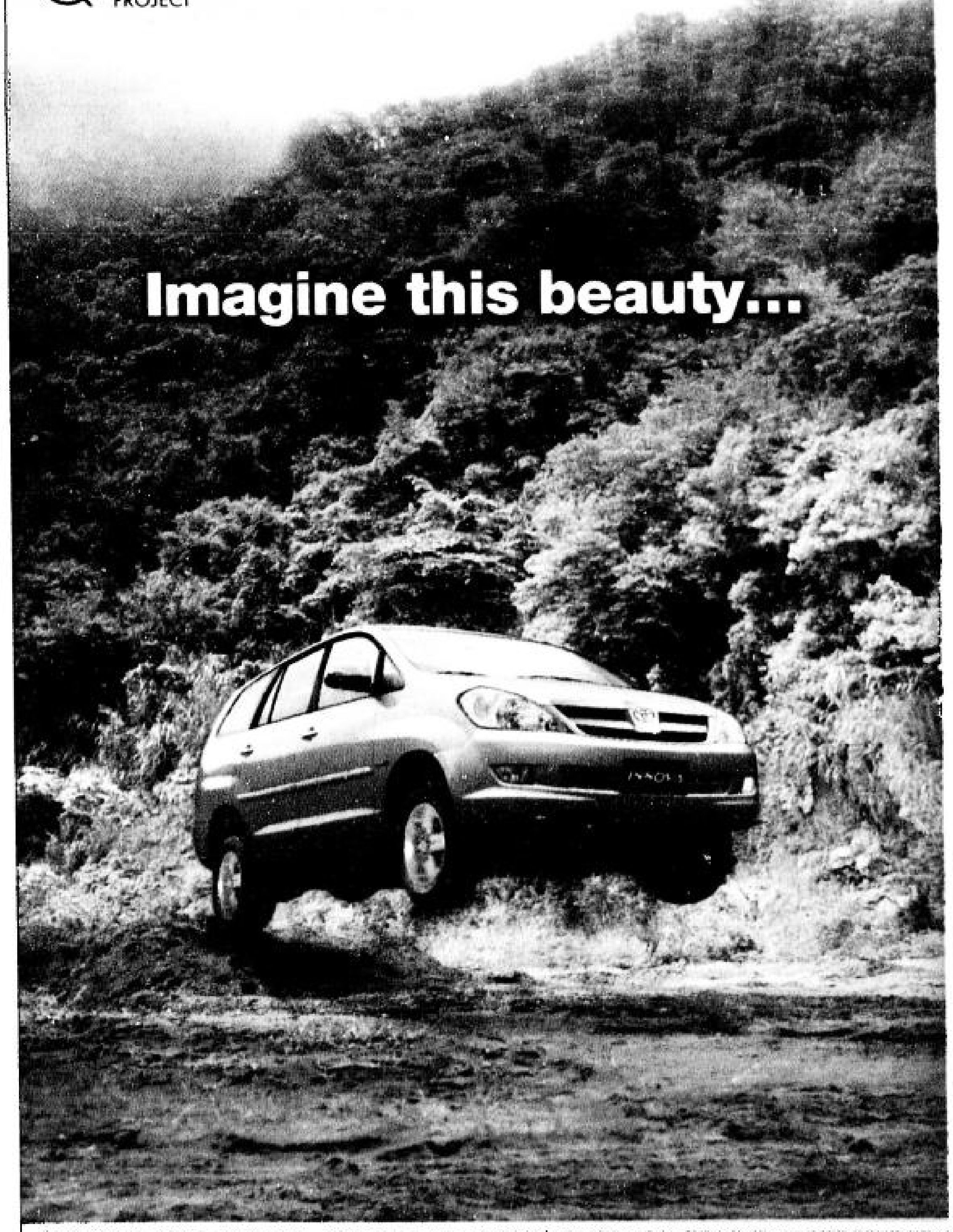

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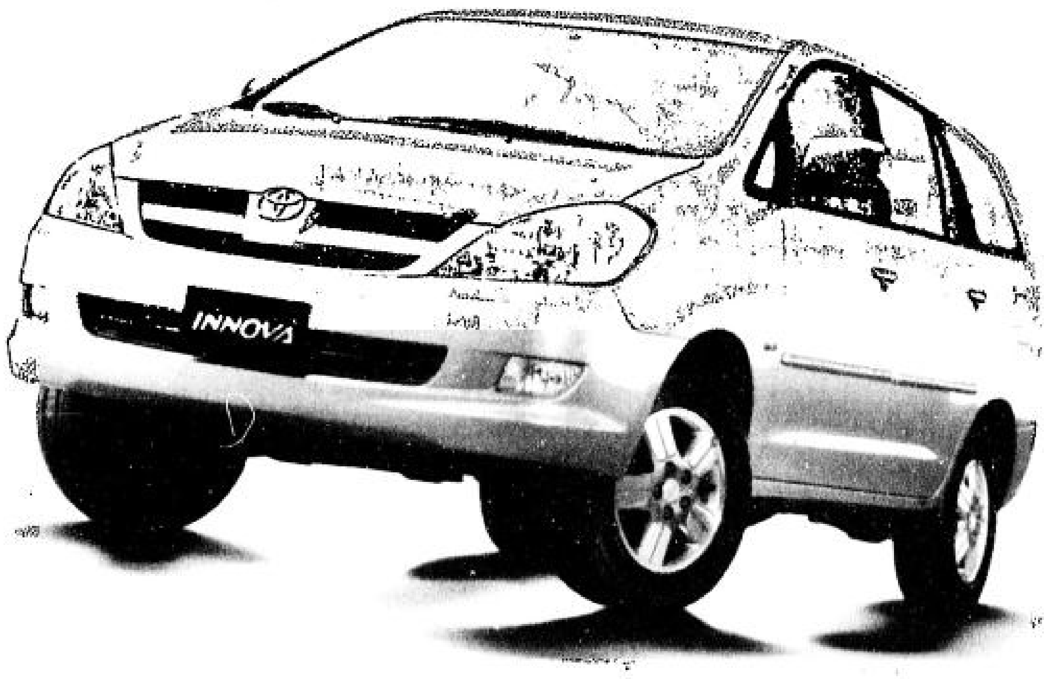

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Suarez rolls perfect game in Boysen tilt

SUAREZ: 12th 300 since 2001

FORMER WORLD CUP CHAMPION CJ Suarez came up with a perfect game as RP Team 1 kept the men's Class O doubles lead Sunday night in the 35th PBC-Boysen International Open tenpin bowling championships at the Green Valley Bowling Center in Pasig City.

Teaming up with 2005 SEAG gold medalist Markwin Tee who had a two-game series of 500, the 27-year-old Suarez scored 258 in the first game before rolling a perfect game that gave the pair a total of 1058 pinfalls.

"I had two perfect games in last week's tournament in Rockwell and I think that my confidence is very high," said Suarez, who used a Roto Grip silverstreak special edition ball for his 12th perfect game since 2001.

Tee (533) and Diego Candano (489) combined for 1018 pinfalls to stay in second while Biboy Rivera (517) and Joonee Gatchalian (459) were third with 976.

The nationals also paced the women's Class O doubles as Jojo Canare and Elaine Florencio combined for 934. RP teammates Kathlynn Lopez and Posadas placed second with 887, while 2005 SEAG Masters champion Liza Clutario and Cecilia Yap joined hands for 866.

Meanwhile, Rivera produced a four-game series of 971 to pace the men's Class O singles division. Suarez had 942 and Tee 934 for second and third, respectively.

In women's play, Clutario tallied 938 for first place followed by ECBA's Irene Benitez (892) and PBAP's Apple Posadas (891).

In the Class A singles, PTBA's Franklin Pardo scored 892 to stay on top among men while PBAP's Angeli Lao had 862 to lead the ladies. Class B leaders were Ceasar Muere (914) and TBAM's Liza Vicente (808).

Tee, Rivera and Suarez came up with 1327 to take the helm in the men's trios, with Ditas Red, Marjo Reyes and Holly Josef showing the way in the women's side with 1348.

In the all-events, AMBA's Jack Interia led men's Class A with 1712 while MTBA's Tito Ngo (1649) and SJBA's Janneth Tan (1511) paced the men's and women's Class B.

With a report from Marc Reyes

Mark the Spark just won't let Gin Kings die

EVERYBODY KNOWS GINEBRA HAS AN acute manpower problem.

But everything seems right when "The Spark" is ready and willing to stoke the crowd favorites' competitive drive.

With Mark Caguioa raising his level of play like no other, the Kings stayed alive in their defense of their PBA Philippine Cup championship.

Caguioa scored a new career-high 45 points to lift Ginebra to a 118-114 overtime win over Air21 last Sunday to boost Ginebra to the quarterfinals.

The win was the third in as many games in the wildcard phase for the Kings, who sealed a best-of-five meeting with Red Bull starting tomorrow.

It would not have been possible if not for Caguioa's sterling plays that earned him the unanimous choice by the PBA Press Corps as its Gran Matador Brandy Player of the Week for the period May 29-June 4.

Ginebra will still be minus key players Romel Adducul, Rodney Santos, Andy Seigle, Mike Holper and Aris Dimaunahan, although Jayjay Helterbrand is expected to recover from a hip injury that sidelined him in the Air21 game.

Caguioa, the 2001 Rookie of the Year, had 32 points, six rebounds and as many assists in a 108-96 win over Talk 'N Text last Wednesday. He followed that up with 18 points and 10 assists in a 108-101 victory over Sta. Lucia Realty.

But he saved his best for the Kings' last game in the round.

The 6-foot off-guard hit 16 points in the third quarter, poured in 11 in the fourth and added seven in overtime, including a booming triple that gave Ginebra the lead for good at 114-111.

"It all boiled down to that, players making the big shots, the big plays," said Ginebra coach Siot Tanquingcen.

"Caguioa had monster numbers anew. What can I say? It's simply a joy working with him."

His 45 is the most by any local in a game since TNT's Asi Taulava set a career-high 51 in the Phone Pals' 131-105 win over Purefoods in the 2004 Fiesta Conference.

47
BARANGAY GINEBRA KINGS
PBA
ACCEL
MARK Caguioa's sterling play earns him Player of the Week honors.

NBC caging: Iligan hosts Iloilo today

THE ILOILO WARRIORS OPEN THEIR THREE-game road trip in Mindanao by playing Firefly Lightings-backed Iligan Crusaders at 6 p.m. today in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship at the MSU-IIT gym here.

The Warriors, representing the Iloilo Basketball League and supported by Toyota-Iloilo and Mayor Jerry Trenas, have won their last two games at home.

But they will be tested by Mayor Lawrence Cruz's Crusaders, who hope to end their classification assignment with a win to grab second place in the southern division.

Big men Francis Sanz and Ruel Balgos are expeced to challenge reigning MVP Christian Nicdao of Iligan. Other Iligan stars are Derrick Hubalde, Marlon Kalaw, Ferdie Go and Olan Omiping.

Iligan is playing its last classification game in the tourney sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

"I told the boys to focus on the game," said Iligan coach Jun Longalong. "This is vital in our bid to grab a good spot in the forthcoming playoffs."

Iligan is currently tied at second place with idle Pagadian with seven victories and three defeats.

Bumgarners top Asian kart prospects

MARK Bumgarner in action in Suzuka.

ASIAN KARTING QUEEN MICHELE BUMGARner and brother Mark, fresh from a stint in the CIK-FIA Asia Pacific Championship, will lead the country's bid for top honors in the Asian Karting Open Championship set June 9-11 at the Carmona Circuit Philippines.

Rated highly in the premiere Formula 125 event, the Bumgarner siblings are confident of holding off their rivals from Thailand, Malaysia, Macau, Singapore, Hong Kong and Indonesia.

It will be the first local race for the Bumgarners—who are backed by Petron, Oakley, Gold's Gym, Salon Prive, Powerade, Accel, Department of Tourism, Solar Sports, JonesBarlowParrish Group and City Kart Racing—following their fruitful stints in the 2006 CIK-FIA ICA World Cup Asia Pacific Championship recently at the Suzuka Circuit in Suzuka, Japan.

The two created quite an impression in the CIK-FIA Asia Pacific Championship in Suzuka as they showed their worth against more experienced racers from Italy, Great Britain, Australia and the host country.

"It was a good learning experience," said Michele, who has been preparing to defend her Asian crown while racing out of the country.

After the Asian event, the two are going back to Italy where they've been racing and training. This time, they'll compete in Round 4 of the Italian Masters Open at Sarno, which is considered one of the toughest kart tracks in the world.

Records galore in HSBC golf

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

IT HAS BEEN BRUITED ABOUT AS THE biggest golf tournament for duffers.

Dyan Castillejo says so. I say so, too.

But let me clarify.

If we say duffers, we mean those who will never qualify for the national team even if they leave their Makati jobs and go full time in golf. Now some will dispute this but let them be. I will say just the same that the true nationals should start young, play no other game but golf the next 20 years, then turn pro after stints for flag and country.

There is no part-time golfer for that's like saying Danding Cojuangco was a part-time brewer when he turned San Miguel Beer into a giant in the world beer market.

Or like saying Mao Zedong was a part-time revolutionary when he founded China in 1949.

Or like saying Ninoy Aquino was a part-time nationalist when he defied Marcos and got himself killed by Marcos' soldiers at the airport tarmac in 1983.

In golf, you are either a duffer or a pro.

Still, when duffers play, expect some fireworks. At times, records, too, get broken.

Thus, when nearly 350 duffers played in the first HSBC Ace Golf Challenge last week, records were established.

Three courses were used at the world-class Eagle Ridge: Norman, Dye and Faldo.

No tournament hereabouts ever owned that distinction.

The PAL Interclub uses only two courses. And that tournament has been there nearly 60 years.

The Fil-Am uses only two courses. And that tournament has been there nearly 60 years.

Eagle Ridge's Aoki was not used for the HSBC golf and I surmise it was a decision to spare Aoki from some of the country's foremost earth-movers. That includes me, of course.

Earth-movers and duffers are one and the same. Most often than not, they disturb nature, if not the habitat of mostly those living underground to include worms.

One golfer I know who refuses to call himself a duffer even if he's not a pro is Katy Katigbak, the former chief aide of FVR.

"I'm a farmer," Katy, of Mt. Malarayat, loves to say. "I love to dig soil."

As in many HSBC golf tournaments in the past, Warner Manning's HSBC Ace Golf Challenge eight days ago was also a fun tournament.

Be that as it may, some were disqualified for arriving late.

"Thank God, I was allowed to play but my score will not count anymore," said Mario Benitez, the owner of the famed Mario's Kitchen, who was one of those disqualified for late arrival. "As consolation, my chance to win the hole-in-one prize has not been forfeited."

Because Mario hit no hole-in-one and neither one from the field did, nobody won the one million mileage points from Philippine Airlines. That's another record for the tournament.

"If I win it," said Toyota executive Danny Isla before teeing off, "I think I'll never consume it all even if my wife and I travel around the world twice in one year."

Six division winners won plane tickets to and hotel accommodations in Shanghai, plus free ringside badges for them to the star-studded HSBC Golf in Shanghai in November.

This is almost a must-see tournament for Tiger Woods fans as Tiger Woods, who played the inaugural HSBC Golf in Shanghai last November for which I had the luck to renew ties with the world No. 1 (I won the raffled tickets for 2 to Shanghai last year at Midlands, remember?), might play again.

No, I wasn't one of the six division winners this year but that's fine. You can't win them all.

No, I also didn't win raffle tickets to Shanghai this time but that's fine, too. Most times, once is enough.

In the last HSBC Golf, I won a beautiful Delsey bag, finished 18 holes at the extremely beautiful Faldo unhindered, and gained new friends along the way, including Lorenzo, Mario, Jefferson and Jason Gob.

To ask, yearn, for more is greed already.

* * *

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

Import leads SSC v'belles past Lyceum

GAMES TOMORROW (*Blue Eagle Gym*)
3 p.m.—Lyceum vs La Salle
5 p.m.—Adamson vs San Sebastian

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THAI IMPORT JAROENSRI BUALEE threw her weight around, and it proved just as crushing as her spikes.

The 5-foot-9 Bualee scattered 31 points, all but one of them on attacks, as San Sebastian shattered Lyceum, 25-13, 25-17, 23-25, 25-9, yesterday in the Shakey's V-League semifinals at the Blue Eagle Gym.

The Lady Pirates found no one who could stop Bualee's hits.

"They were so powerful, too strong," said Lyceum coach Emiliano Lontoc, whose charges fell to 4-5 and are now in danger of getting booted out of the semifinals.

Bualee, working with setter Ma. Theresa Iratay, had 64 attempts overall in a superb performance that gave the Lady Stags their fifth win in nine matches.

Joy Pulido contributed 13 points, 10 through spikes and two on blocks, while Laurence Ann Latigay had 10 points for the Stags.

Guest player Ma. Concepcion Legaspi led Lyceum with 12 points, nine on attacks, while Dahlia Cruz made eight of her 10 points on kills.

Bualee easily sowed fear on the Lady Pirates by hammering the ball at every opportunity in the first set. The Lady Stags looked ready for a sweep as Rysabelle Devanadera added six service winners of her eight-point total in the second set.

But San Sebastian let its guard down in the next set, allowing Lyceum to extend the match.

SPORTSWATCH

Open duckpin goes to La Union

EIGHT-HUNDRED BOWLERS FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY WILL SEE action in the Philippine Duckpin Bowling Council National Open to be hosted by the Oasis Bowling Center and Resort in San Fernando, La Union, on June 7-11. PHIDBC president Inez Magbual said the Open is going out-of-town due to the resurgence of duckpin bowling in Ilocos, La Union, Pangasinan and Baguio City. The last time La Union hosted a big duckpin event was in October 1991. Three-time PSA duckpin bowler of the year Jun Matalote and Rene Capulad are expected to vie for honors in the men's Masters competition.

Submission of weights for WTJ derby up

TODAY IS THE DEADLINE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES FOR THE WTJ 1st Anniversary 5-Cock Derby at the Makati Coliseum. Entries will be accommodated from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. and participants may call 896-3545 or 895-6475 for inquiries. More than 100 fights involving 43 participants will be unleashed starting at 2 p.m. tomorrow. A guaranteed total prize of P1 million awaits the winners for an entry fee of P25,000.

'Hatawan' stakes P3.5 million

THE "HATAWAN SA TAG-ULAN 6-COCK DERBY SLATED JULY 1, 4, 6, 8 AND 11 will allow the Roligon Mega Cockpit to reassert its reputation as "everybody's cockpit." According to promoter Rolly Ligon, the annual Hatawan is one of Roligon's biggest attractions with the entry field usually topping 400. A cash pot of P3.5 million is at stake regardless of the number of entries. "Majority of those taking part are small-time breeders, that's why we lowered the entry fee to P8,800," Ligon said. For inquiries, call 851-2275 or 833-1638.

Sta. Ana special 4-cocker today

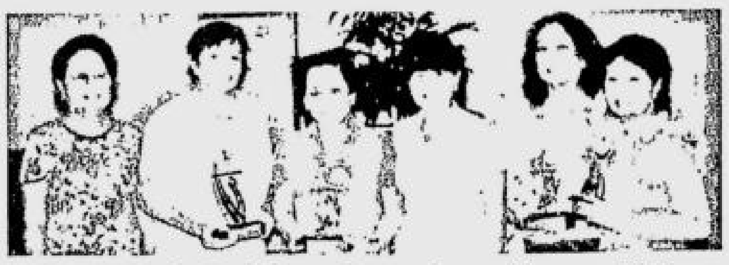
COCKERS AND DERBY REGULARS FROM METRO MANILA collide starting at 7 p.m. today in the Flower Group 4-Cock Derby at the Sta. Ana Cockpit on A.P. Reyes Avenue, Makati City. At least 68 fights are on tap. Pit manager Butchoy Olano said the winners will get a cash prize of P300,000. Meanwhile, three more 3-cockers are slated at the venue on June 13 (hosted by Rey Cabial), June 20 (Cito Manansala) and June 27 (Nelson Pacquiao).

New fight format at Roligon

THE "FASTEST WIN ONE-COCK ULUTAN" AT ROLIGON MEGA COCKPIT will now have a new format and held only on Friday starting June 9, the cockpit management announced yesterday. A fastest win champion will receive P4,000 and will be chosen after every three fights. Registration fee is P500, according to promoter Roger del Rosario. Meanwhile, boxing hero Manny Pacquiao emerged solo champion in last week's NCA 8-Cock International Derby after his Super Pacman entry tallied seven points.

Tukaan Challenge kicks off at Big Dome

THUNDERBIRD PLATINUM AND TUKAAN TELEMAGAZINE HOST EMOY Gorgonioa are staging the Tukaan Challenge One-Day 5-Cock Derby at the Araneta Coliseum today. A cash pot of P500,000 is at stake for an entry fee of P10,000. The fastest win champion in the derby promoted by Emoy Gorgonia & Friends will drive home an all-terrain vehicle (ATV), while the slowest win champ will take home one ton of assorted Thunderbird Power Feeds. The fights will be shown in the Sultada TV Show on Prime Channel.


TOP finishers in the Rogie Ferrer Cup are shown with sponsor Ms Ferrer (third from right) and chief organizer Nanette Sinco (extreme left). They are (from left) Maria Brumann, lowest gross; champion Myrna Narcelles; second placer Aloma Lopez and third finisher Lally Trinidad.

Narcelles rules Rogie Ferrer Cup golf

MYRNA NARCELLES SCORED A NET 72 TO WIN THE RECENT ROGIE FERrer senior ladies' invitational golf tournament at Valley Golf and Country Club course in Antipolo City. Narcelles nipped Aloma Lopez, Lally Trinidad, Rogie Ferrer and Nely Cruz, who tallied identical net 73s. Lopez and Trinidad clinched second and third after the tiebreak, while Ferrer, a former track and field queen-turned-golfer, who is now based in the United States, and Cruz settled for fifth and sixth, respectively. Maria Brumann, a 16-handicapper, fired the lowest gross of 89. Among the winners of special prizes were Noemi Cuenca, longest drive; Alice Scarella, most accurate drive; Nena Nakpil nearest to the pin.

Sharapova, Mauresmo founder on Paris clay

MARIA Sharapova hits a backhand against Dinara Safina. AFP

PARIS—MARIA SHARAPOVA'S COLLAPSE ranked as a shocker. Amelie Mauresmo's meltdown seemed all too familiar.

Both losses make the road to a French Open title a bit easier for Venus Williams, the last remaining American.

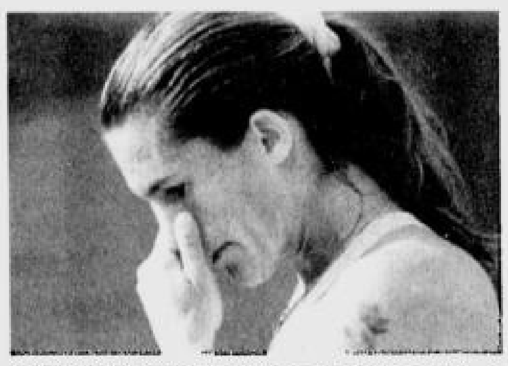
"Lone flag waving gently in the wind," Williams said.

Sharapova squandered a 5-1 lead in the final set, lost 18 of the final 21 points and was beaten by Dinara Safina 7-5, 2-6, 7-5 in the fourth round Sunday.

Mauresmo, a perennial flop on her home court, fizzled again by losing to 17-year-old Nicole Vaidisova, 6-7 (5), 6-1, 6-2. Vaidisova, seeded 16th, next faces the No. 11-seeded Williams, who advanced to the quarterfinals when she won the final four games to beat No. 7 Patty Schnyder 4-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Williams committed 19 unforced errors in the first set, then totaled 16 in the last two. The reigning Wimbledon champion is making her 10th try at a French Open title.

The last American in the men's draw, No. 8 James Blake, lost to No. 25 Gael Monfils 6-2, 6-7 (2), 7-6 (1), 5-7, 6-4. The third-round match had been suspended after two sets Saturday because of darkness.



MAURESMO: Perennial flop on home court AP

The top-ranked Mauresmo won her first major title at the Australian Open in January, but she has yet to make the semifinals at Roland Garros in 12 appearances.

Vaidisova sank to her knees after smacking the last of her 38 winners on match point. She and Safina earned their first berth in a Grand Slam quarterfinal.

Top-ranked Roger Federer, seeking his fourth consecutive major title, advanced to the quarterfinals by beating No. 20 Tomas Berdych 6-3, 6-2, 6-3. Croats Ivan Ljubicic and Mario Ancic also won, as did two-time champion Justine Henin-Hardenne, two-time runner-up Kim Clijsters and former US Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova on the women's side.

Henin-Hardenne, seeded fifth, beat 2004 champion Anastasia Myskina 6-1, 6-4. The Belgian's opponent Tuesday will be No. 13 Anna-Lena Groenefeld, who became the third first-time Grand Slam quarterfinalist on the women's side when she beat No. 32 Gisela Dulko 6-3, 6-4.

Comebacking Martina Hingis rolled back Israel's Shahah Peer, 6-3, 2-6, 6-3, to arrange a quarterfinal meeting with Clijsters.

No. 10 Gaston Gaudio, the 2004 champion, was eliminated by No. 6 Nikolay Davydenko, 6-3, 6-4, 3-6, 6-3. Davydenko will next play No. 3 David Nalbandian, who swept qualifier Martin Vassallo Arguello 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

Sharapova, seeded fourth, said rustiness following a recent injury layoff contributed to her unraveling. *AP*

Fil-American Denise Dy, a 16-year-old member of the Philippine team in the last Southeast Asian Games, bowed to Kristina Kucova of Slovakia, 3-6, 6-0, 6-3, in the first round of girls singles Sunday.

Top squads get ready for WC kickoff

Brazil, host Germany tipped to go all the way

BERLIN—FAVORITES BRAZIL AND GERMANY arrive at their World Cup bases on Monday to finalize preparations for the globe's most-watched sporting event.

The tournament kicks off in Munich on Friday, when Germany takes on Costa Rica, and will end, 63 games later, on July 9 with the final at the Olympiastadion in Berlin.

Champion Brazil, who will be based in Konigstein/Taunus, start as clear favorite with striker Ronaldinho the player the fans are most looking forward to watching.

"Brazil is the only team that is a bit above the others, then there are quite a few teams on a similar level," said former Italy striker Paolo Rossi, the top scorer when Italy won the 1982 World Cup.

Berlin-based Germany, which won the competition when it was last held on home soil in 1974, is among the sides hoping to stop Brazil winning its sixth world title.

Argentina, which has an injury worry over striker Lionel Messi, represents the other main hope from Latin America.

Europe's other main challengers are England, Italy, France and the Netherlands.

England's plans have been hampered by a foot injury to their most dangerous player, striker Wayne Rooney.

Marcello Lippi's Italy has not been helped by a scandal caused by a match-fixing investigation in its domestic league.

France has plenty of experience although there are concerns about the form of midfielder Zinedine Zidane, the hero of their 1998 win who will retire after the tournament.

The Netherlands had three players, Philip Cocu, Wesley Sneijder and Giovanni van Bronckhorst, injured in Sunday's 1-1 draw with Australia. *Reuters*

Cuban's Mavs: Bad old days gone

DALLAS—LIKE MOST LONGTIME DALLAS Mavericks fans, Mark Cuban remembers the bad old days, when "postseason play" meant being part of the draft lottery.

Boy, how times have changed.

Injected with Cuban's cash, Dirk Nowitzki's jumper and Avery Johnson's leadership, the Mavs are headed to the NBA finals for the first time, starting Thursday night (Friday morning in Manila) at home against the Miami Heat.

"We're excited, obviously," Johnson said after the Mavericks erased an 18-point deficit to beat Phoenix 102-93 Saturday and earn the silver trophy that goes to the Western Conference champion. "But we still have a lot of work ahead of us."

With the Mavs taking Sunday off and several days after that to delve into how they will try slowing Dwyane Wade and Shaquille O'Neal, it's worth looking back at how far they have come.

The Mavericks were born in 1980, became contenders amazingly quickly, then faded faster than you can say Roy Tarpley. They were so bad in the 1990s that they had the lowest winning percentage of any team in major pro sports in North America—even worse than the Clippers.

"You could walk up two minutes before game time and buy a front-row seat for $10," said Cuban, a cheap-seat regular long before he became an Internet billionaire.

When he bought the team in January 2000, Dallas was 9-23 and well on its way to collecting lottery pingpong balls for a 10th straight year.

Beyond making the finals, Dallas has re-established itself as a playoff perennial. The Mavs have made six straight trips to the playoffs with only one constant: Nowitzki.

But the most important shift was the dedication to defense that Johnson brought when he replaced Don Nelson late last season.

"He demanded it," said Donnie Nelson, the team's president of basketball operations and Don Nelson's son. "That's the difference." *AP*

NOWITZKI

Korean rookie rules Shoprite Classic

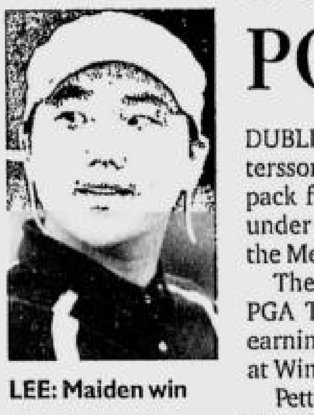
GALLOWAY, NEW JERSEY—SOUTH KOREA'S SEON HWA Lee fired four straight birdies to start the back nine en route to a three-stroke win at the $1.4-million LPGA Shoprite Classic on Sunday.

The tour rookie rallied past defending champ Annika Sorenstam and Japan's Ai Miyazato by carding a sizzling eight-under-par 63 at the Seaview Resort and Spa Bay course to finish at 16-under 197.

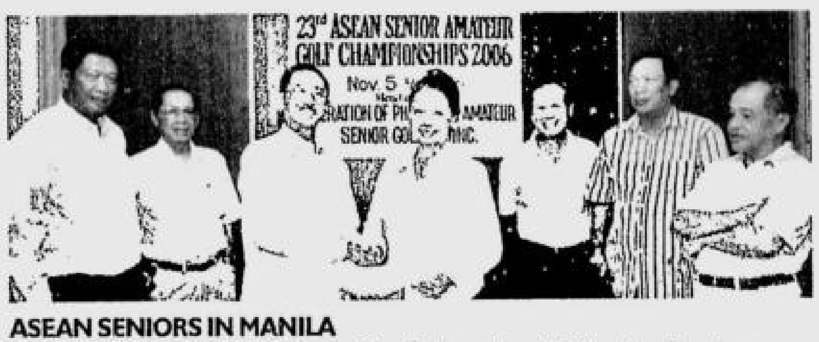
Miyazato entered Sunday with a one-shot lead over Sorenstam but struggled.

Miyazato carded a three-over 74 to slip to a tie for 13th.

Sorenstam closed her round with an eagle, but it was only good enough to get to 13-under 200 and tie for second with Jeong Jang (64) and Sherri Steinhauer (67). *AFP*



LEE: Maiden win



23rd ASEAN SENIOR AMATEUR GOLF CHAMPIONSHIPS 2006
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ASEAN SENIORS IN MANILA

Abelardo Villanueva, president of the Federation of Philippine Amateur Senior Golfers (third from left), and Carmita Francisco, CEO of CBF Consultancy, seal their partnership for the staging of the 23rd Asean Senior Amateur Golf Championships on Nov. 5-9 at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite. Looking on (from left) are Philip Judan, Anthony Fernandez, Rudy Angus, Clyde Fernandez and Tony Fernando.

Pettersson claims second PGA victory at Memorial

DUBLIN, OHIO—SWEDEN'S CARL PETTERSSON held his nerve while the chasing pack faltered carding a final round one-under 71 to claim a two-shot victory at the Memorial tournament on Sunday.

The 28-year-old Swede's second career PGA Tour title comes with huge bonus, earning him an invitation to the US Open at Winged Foot in two weeks' time.

Pettersson started the final round with a two-shot cushion and despite another brief rain delay he could not be distracted posting a winning total of 12-under 276 for a two-shot victory over Americans Brett Wetterich (67) and Zach Johnson (70).

Plagued by weather delays the entire week at the Muirfield Village Golf Club, Pettersson turned in an unflappable performance particularly on a pressure packed final day.

Pettersson's round included three bogeys but on the first two he immediately hit back with a birdie, including a spectacular chip in from the fringe at the 11th after dropping a shot at the 10th. *Reuters*

Ty-Littaua Sherwood champ

MARILYN TY AND HER GUEST PARTNER Dennis Littaua combined for a net 132 points to win the overall net plum in the recently concluded fourth Sherwood Hills Invitational member-guest tournament of the Sherwood Hills Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

Ty and Littaua got their bid going with a 12-under 48 points in the best-ball format on opening day then made six-under 42s each the next day in aggregate play for a 36-hole total of 132 at the Jack Nicklaus-designed course.

They finished three points ahead of the tandems of Wan Sup Park-Il Soo Bae and Butch Arguelles-Finina Gorres who both tallied 129s.

Park and Bae, scoring 48 and 81, prevailed in the countback over Arguelles-Gorres for Division 2 honors.

Luis Oh and Won Ki Chung took the Division I title, Shean Bedi and Jingy Tuason were the low gross winners and the Isuzu pair of Art Balmadrid-Lorenti Velasco captured the sponsors trophy.

Major sponsors were Golforce, Club Leisure Management, Asia-Pacific Golf Corp., Federal Management, Kork Inc., Corporate Air, Warbird, Information Professionals Inc., Isuzu, Mabuhay Golf and MRT.

Tough task for racing czar Fianza

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

PEOPLE KNOW THE NEW CHAIR OF THE Philippine Racing Commission, retired Gen. Florencio Fianza, as the military man who headed the transportation support services of last year's Southeast Asian Games. Other than that, he is virtually unknown in the field of sports, particularly in the highly technical sport of horse racing. He is not even a horse owner unlike previous Philracom chiefs Ambassador Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, the late Makati Mayor Nemesio Yabut, Augusto Santos, polo player Nikki Jacinto, Jose Avelino, Ambassador Antonio Lagdameo, Dick Katigbak and former pelotaris Andrew Sanchez and Jaime Dilag.

Given his lack of experience, Fianza will be facing a tough task in solving the problems confronting the industry. Over time, the image of horse racing has been tarnished by rumors of graft and corruption and of rampant fixing of races, among other anomalies. The industry is falling apart because public confidence is waning. What the Philracom needs right now is a leader who is fearless and honest; one who can raise the level of public patronage; and a racing board that cannot be pressured by powerful and influential people.

Fianza should show that he could be trusted to lead the racing agency to greater heights and that he is not just a Philracom chair who throws his weight around because of his closeness to Malacañang.

As I have said before, I have no problem with Fianza's appointment as long as the new racing czar genuinely loves and understands the sport. The *bayang karerista* will give him a reasonable period of time to prove himself.

Taking a positive outlook, one racing club official said that Fianza, being a longtime military man, is just what the doctor ordered. "His military training will be very useful in imposing discipline on the industry's crooks." He added that Fianza could very well achieve success by strictly instilling in the industry's major players a love of following the law. "The rules are already there and what is needed is simply to implement them."

In some cases, the stewards' decisions have been reversed by the Philracom. Even the suspensions on jockeys' (with powerful connection) have been lifted by Malacañang. When this happens, the public becomes very disappointed. The proliferation of illegal bookies is another problem. To make matters worse, some of these bookies are horse owners themselves. There is also a need to reduce the number of racing days and limit the number of races for the week to give the overworked horses more time to rest.

In the wake of recent accidents at the San Lazaro and Santa Ana ovals, the operators of the two racing clubs should improve their track facilities for the safety of both the jockeys and the horses. The Philracom must not also allow the staging of major stakes races where only two or three horses are competing. And, as I have written before, the Philracom should be run by a professional manager and officials who are not horse owners in order to avoid conflict of interest.

* * *

WORLD CUP HEATS UP: On June 9, the World Cup of football kicks off in Germany, with five-time champion Brazil, Argentina, England and host country Germany, looming as the teams to beat. Thirty-two countries will vie for the coveted Jules Rimet Trophy in matches spread across several German cities.

In 76 years since the mammoth soccerfest was launched in Uruguay in 1930, the World Cup has produced only two winners from two continents, South America and Europe. Asia and Africa are still without a World Cup champion.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Pabilic Express (6), King Zach (2), Yapee Yoyoh (4), Super Duper (5)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Pampanga Queen (3), Awesome Power (1), Shifty (2), Bomb Shell (6), Maningning (4)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Mighty Mare (6), Opening Statement (5), Queen Of Diamonds (1), Rhyme And A Prayer (6)
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Music Quest (4), Quick Pick (7), Morning Glory (6), Yankee Clipper (2)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Western Dancer (4), Sky King (7), Power Dance (3), She Boom (2)
Race 6—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Silver Place (6), Mika Mix (10), Iverson (12), Cool Operator (8), Yoshiwara (3), Medal's Time (2)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Juanito's Dream/Lokak D'Great (8), Real Tough (2), Speed Admiral (5), Wynn's Connection (6), Super Dave (7)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Now Showing (14), Guided Missile (7), Divine Right (8), Tanging Ikaw (9), Playing Cool (13), Mary Jane Bomb (4)

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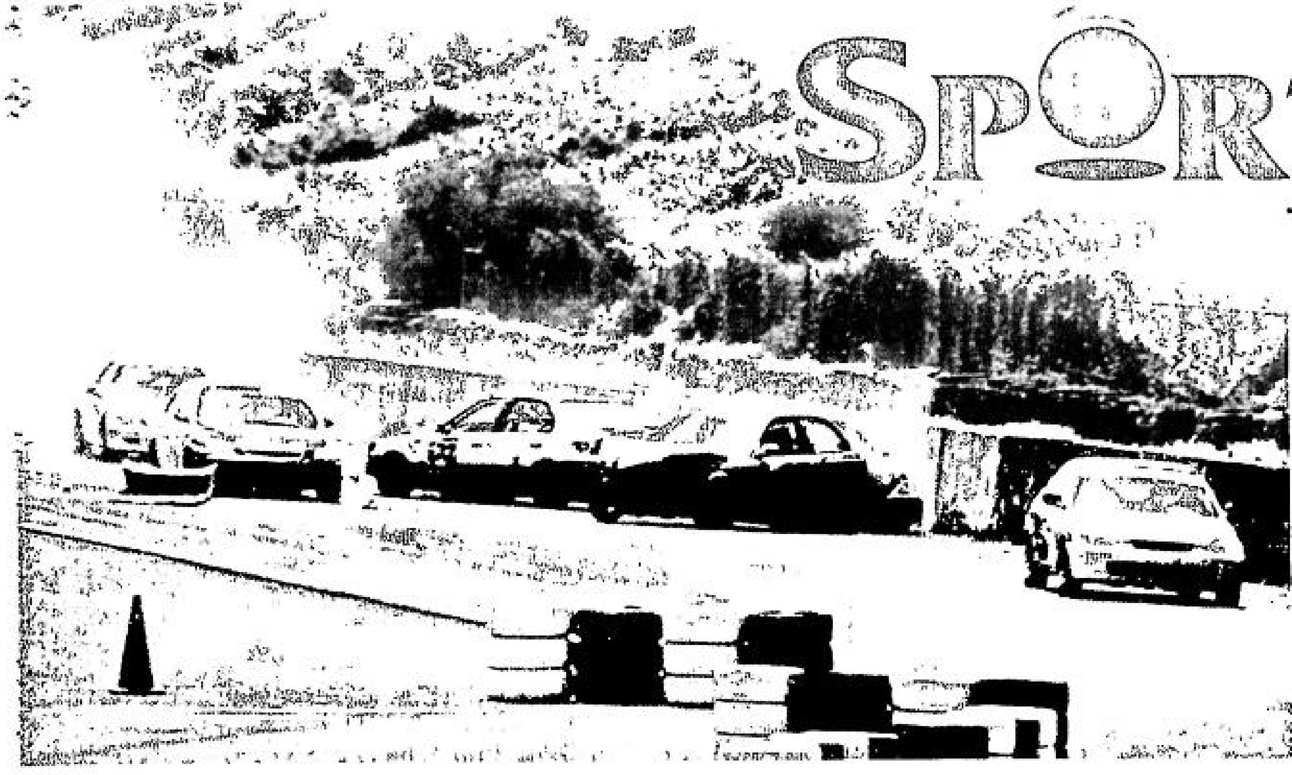
SPORTS



A MESSY three-car collision involving Peewee Mendiola, Nico Montinola and JP Cariño mars the morning race in the Group 3 race. The crash left untouched Matteo Guidicelli (yellow car, right) who speeds ahead of Ulysses Maninding and Jeff Borja (first and second from left) en route to a breakthrough victory in the series.

SUBIC SPLURGE

Coseteng sweeps leg, wrests lead

SUBIC—JODY COSETENG OF SAN MIG COFfee-Erg Alcotonic bounced back mightily, sweeping Rounds 3 and 4 Sunday in the second leg of the 2006 San Mig Coffee-Petron Blaze Cup at the Subic International Raceway.

Displaying his old form, Coseteng pulled away from the pack at the start and was never headed in scoring the crucial double victory that put him back on track for a ninth straight crown.

Coseteng grabbed the overall series lead with 54 points, two ahead of Kookie Ramirez of Petron Ultron-SRA who placed third in the first race and second in the next race.

"We had a better setup this time, the car was doing good since Thursday," said Coseteng. "Everything was just perfect for us today."

Ramirez said he was still satisfied with his performance despite problems that hounded his bid for a second sweep in this series sanctioned by the Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) and sponsored by San Miguel Corp., Petron, TNT, Gerry's Grill, Rota, Bendix, Starbright Bodykits, SIR, Gadgets, KTC Tools, Rayban, The Philippine Star, 97.9 Home Radio, 92.3 Joey FM, 99.5 RT, and autoindustriya.com.

"Bad setup," explained Ramirez. "We made the wrong decision shifting to new tires. Likewise, the car wasn't braking well.

"Good thing, we got a big help from Mato Tan who fixed some problems for us in our afternoon race. The setup was much better and we managed to keep Don (Pastor) behind."

Pastor, now donning the colors of Bioactive Team TEC Philippines, was a revelation with his second and third place finishes that moved him up to third overall with 36 points.

Louis Ramirez checked in fourth in the morning race while privateer Dominic Bon ended fifth.

Bon had a better race in the afternoon as he grabbed fourth place behind Pastor, while Renan Morales, who suffered mechanical problems in the morning race, wound up fifth in Round 4.

GELLITA Castillo (back) and Centro Atletico teammate Selina San Diego move in to return a smash in the girls' doubles final. RYAN LIM

Castillo nails three crowns; Magnaye big

CENTRO ATLETICO'S GELITA CASTILLO WENT through the distance before outlasting her final round foe and Peter Magnaye pulled through in straight sets as they nailed the singles crowns in the centerpiece 14-under division of the JVC Open Junior Badminton Championships at SM Mall of Asia over the weekend.

The 11-year-old Castillo, who never dropped a set on her way to the finals, rallied from a first-set loss to wear down Abigail Garcia, 16-21, 21-6, 21-17, in the girls' final.

Magnaye, the 13-year-old PNP bet, overcame some anxious moments in the second set to thwart Kevin Panganiban, 21-13, 24-22, and cop the boys' title.

Garcia came back to take the girls' doubles plum in partnership with Malvinne Alcala following a 21-16, 21-10 whipping of Jessa Sampurna and Pia Fabros.

Earlier, Lance Bautista repulsed Michael Bote in a thrilling three-setter, 21-15, 16-21, 21-18, to snatch the boys' singles crown, while Castillo outclassed Alcala, 21-16, 21-11, to annex the girls' singles crown in the 12-under division.

Castillo raised her championship haul to three by teaming up with Selina San Diego and nipping Ma. Bianca Santos and Ma. Victoria Vizmonte, 22-20, 21-18, for the girls' doubles crown.

Other championship results: 12-under boys' doubles—John Monterubio-Bryan Ocenar d. Lance Bautista-Daniel Macaraig, 21-18, 21-13, 21-16; 10-under girls' singles—Cassandra Lim d. Marina Caculitan, 21-8, 19-21, 21-9; Boys' singles—Carlo Romo d. Alvin Morada, 21-15, 21-10; 10-under girls' doubles—C. Lim-Jacky Kaeyzer d. Ingrid Obinial-Alyssa Leonardo, 21-19, 21-10; Boys' doubles—Joshua Monterubio-Carl Clemente d. Sonny Lozadas-Francis Ablang, 21-13, 21-16.

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SCENES FROM A TRYOUT: Four who made it; overwhelmed (one thousand to two) judges Jim Libiran and Carmela Buhain gives out the coveted Blue Form; and "Philippine Idol" host Ryan Agoncillo drops by to wish the applicants luck.

RP 'Idol's' first yield

By Marinel R. Cruz

A BOY WITH autism was among the 80 applicants who passed the first major "Philippine Idol" auditions on Saturday.

So was a boy who came to the tryouts wearing old slippers because he could not afford shoes.

This was relayed to INQUIRER Entertainment by Jim Libiran, head of ABC 5's production, news and public affairs department and one of the two judges during the casting—prior to an elimination round with judges Ryan Cayabyab, Pilita Corrales and Francis Magalona.

2 girls

"The boy borrowed shoes from one of the security personnel there [The PICC in Pasay City]," Libiran added.

A girl who defied her mother's orders not to go to the auditions also earned the casting duo's nod.

"One other girl, finding out she had passed, wept so hard that we had to console her," said Libiran.

He added: "I realized how important it was to most of them—not something that we in 'Philippine Idol' would want to toy with."

Carmela M. Buhain, Philippine Normal University supervising professor in Music, helped Libiran pick the 80 contestants.

Good luck

Almost 2,000 contestants submitted their application forms on Saturday, but only the first 1,000 were made to audition. The rest were instructed to return the following day.

INQUIRER Entertainment was at the contestant's holding area when FrancisM dropped by and wished everybody good luck.

"Idol" judges Ryan and Pilita were also at the audition venue that day.

In the casting level, only a total of 100 contestants will be picked from all over the country.

ABC 5 will premiere "Philippine Idol" in the last week of July.

Thank you for helping me face my teenage years confidently...

It is during teenage years that one starts to come-out of their "shell". But how can I ever do that when I have ACNE on my face??? I desperately tried everything to no avail. It was a rough start for me. I became very shy and timid.

Good thing my mom is always there to feel and fill my needs. She made me consult a doctor. My doctor said that my acne problem was due to hormonal imbalance and she gave me a combiphasic pill for treatment. Now, I am pimple-free and ready to face the world!

- Analyn, Makati City

As studies have shown, many acne patients develop feelings of low esteem & reduced self-confidence. They withdraw from social life and feel handicapped when looking for career opportunities. Acne can develop when oil in the skin is produced excessively. The culprit could be the male hormone, androgen, which promotes oil production in the skin. Oily skin in the face and upper part of the body and oily hair are other symptoms of excessive androgen. Although topical treatments are sometimes successful, women have other cost-effective options to treat acne. One of these options is hormonal therapy with the only unique combiphasic pill available in the market. The combiphasic pill has a proven efficacy in treating mild to moderate acne in women. When taken regularly, it also prevents the development of new acne lesions.

Hormonal therapy is important to consider when treating acne. It is best to consult your doctor about your options. For more information, email your queries at gracial@organon.ph or send a text at 0918 3677412.

Know more about ACNE! Join us at the FACIAL SKIN HEALTH CONVENTION on JUNE 24, 1-5 PM at Astoria Plaza, Ortigas Buss. District, Pasig City. There will be presentations on the causes of acne, the treatment options and, facial skin care. Free consultation to a dermatologist will also be provided to early registrants. Guest speakers: Ms. Olen Lim, Dr. Claudia Samonte (dermatologist) and, Dr. Sylvia Santos (OB gynecologist). ENTRANCE IS FREE! Register by sending us an email at ealimmktg@mymail.ph inter.net or text at 0918 3677412. Please give your name, age, contact no. and profession. Limited seats available.

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ALL ABOUT LOVE 12:10 / 2:35 / 5:00 / 7:25 / 9:50	MANAY PO 12:40 / 2:55 / 5:10 / 7:25 / 9:40	THE DA VINCI CODE 1:00 / 4:00 / 600 / 7:00 / 9:10 / 10:00	
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 7:10 / 9:50	OVER THE HEDGE 12:00 / 2:00 / 4:00	X-MEN 3 12:00 / 12:40 / 2:20 / 3:00 4:40 / 5:20 / 7:40 / 10:00	X-MEN 3 1:40 / 4:00 / 6:20 / 8:40

Ali MALL CINEMAS

X-MEN 3 12:15 / 2:25 / 4:35 / 6:45 / 8:55	THE DA VINCI CODE 12:05 / 3:00 / 5:55 / 8:50	ALL ABOUT LOVE 12:10 R5 / 1:15 / 3:40 / 6:05 / 8:3
CHAOS 12:10 R 3/ 1:50 / 4:10 / 6:30 / 8:50	MANAY PO 12:10 R 3/ 1:45 / 4:00 / 6:15 / 8:30	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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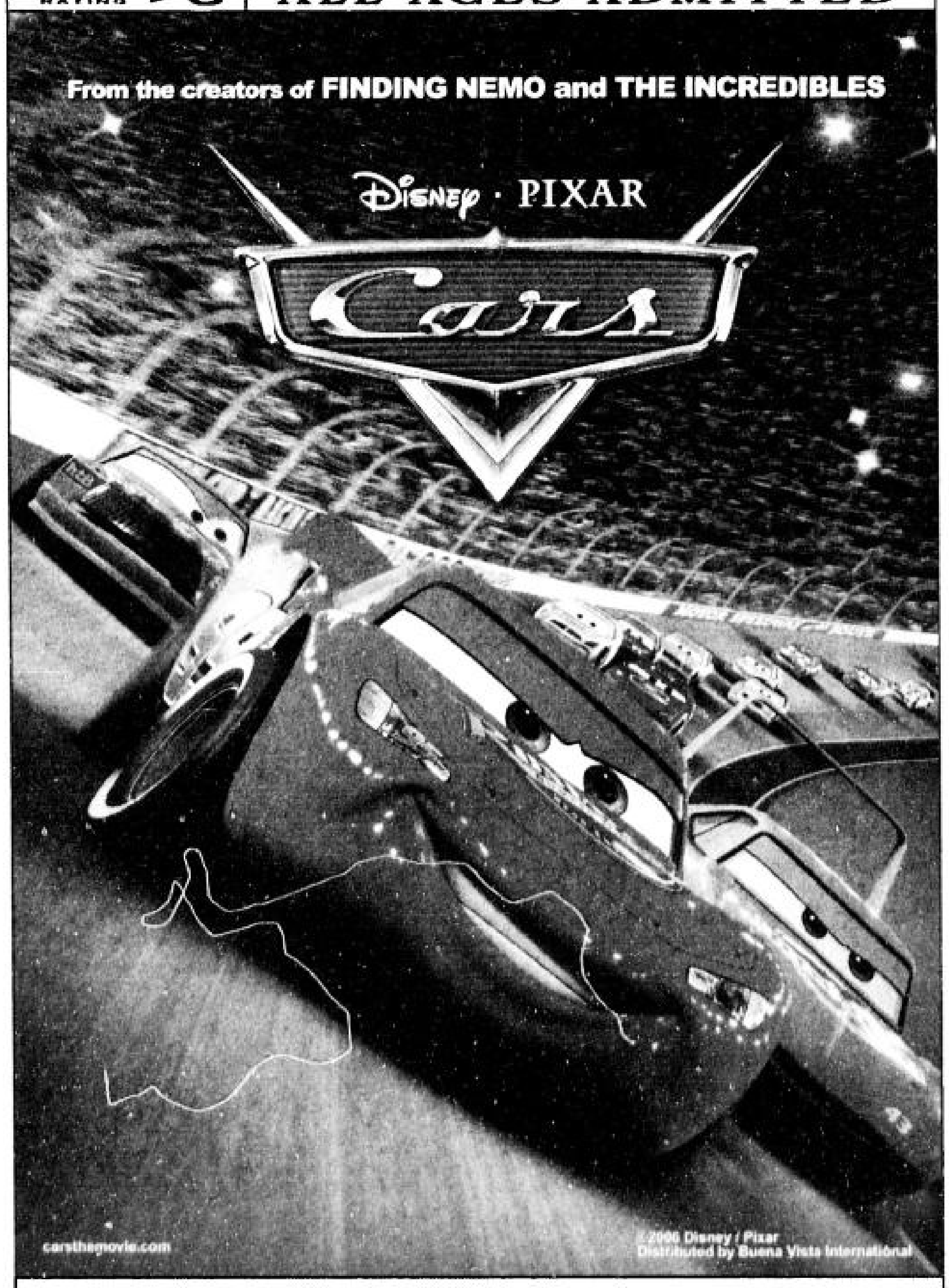
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OPENS TOMORROW

METRO MANILA

SM MALL OF ASIA
SAN MIGUEL Coca-Cola IMAX THEATRE
EVEREST
11:30 1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30
NASCAR 3D
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00
PREMIERE CINEMA
ALL ABOUT LOVE
DIRECTOR'S CLUB
XMEN III
CENTERSTAGE
RESERVED
1 THE OMEN
2 XMEN III
3 CHAOS
4 BENCHWARMERS
5 OVER THE HEDGE
MANAY PO

THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
FAILURE TO LAUNCH
CINEMA 2
XMEN III

SM NORTH EDSA
XMEN III
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 MANAY PO
4 THE OMEN
5 FAILURE TO LAUNCH
6 BENCHWARMERS
7 M:I:III
CHAOS

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 THE OMEN
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 MANAY PO
4 XMEN III

SM MEGACINEMA
1 POSEIDON
2 BENCHWARMERS
3 XMEN III
4 XMEN III
5 CHAOS
6 M:I:III
7 OVER THE HEDGE
8 FAILURE TO LAUNCH
9 MANAY PO
10 ALL ABOUT LOVE
11 THE OMEN
12 SILENT HILL

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 XMEN III
2 CHAOS
3 ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 THE OMEN
5 MANAY PO
6 OVER THE HEDGE
7 FAILURE TO LAUNCH
8 BENCHWARMER
M:I:III

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 BENCHWARMERS
2 OVER THE HEDGE
3 SILENT HILL
4 CHAOS
5 MANAY PO
6 THE OMEN
7 XMEN III
8 ALL ABOUT LOVE
9 M:I:III
10 POSEIDON
11 FAILURE TO LAUNCH
12 REINCARNATION

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 XMEN III
2 MANAY PO
3 ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 BENCHWARMERS

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 THE OMEN
2 CHAOS
3 XMEN III
4 BENCHWARMERS
5 ALL ABOUT LOVE
6 POSEIDON
OVER THE HEDGE
7 FAILURE TO LAUNCH
8 M:I:III
BENCHWARMERS

SM CITY MANILA
1 THE OMKEN
2 POSEIDON
3 M:I:III
4 XMEN III
5 FAILURE TO LAUNCH
6 XMEN III
7 ALL ABOUT LOVE
8 MANAY PO
9 CHAOS
10 BENCH WARMERS
11 OVER THE HEDGE
12 REINCARNATION

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 CHAOS
2 XMEN III
3 THE OMEN
4 BENCH WARMERS
5 MANAY PO
6 ALL BOUT LOVE

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
1 THE OMEN
2 XMEN III
3 ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 MANAY PO

SM CITY SUCAT
1 MANAY PO
2 THE OMEN
3 ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 XMEN III

EVENT CALENDAR — SM CENTER Stage — EVENT CALENDAR

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LUZON

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 THE OMEN
2 ALL ABPOUT LOVE
MANAY PO
4 BENCHWARMERS

SM CITY MARILAO
BENCHWARMERS
ALL ABOUT LOVE
MANAY PO
4 XMEN III

SM CITY BACOOR
1 POSEIDON
2 M:I:III
3 XMEN III
4 MANAY PO
5 THE OMEN
6 ALL ABOUT LOVE
7 BENCHWARMERS
8 SILENT HILL

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 XMEN III
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
BENCHWARMERS
4 MANAY PO

SM CITY LUCENA
1 XMEN II
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 MANAY PO
4 SILENT HILL

SM CITY CLARK
THE OMEN
XMEN III
ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 MANAY PO
M:I:III
BENCHWARMERS

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 THE OMEN
2 M:I:III
3 XMEN III
4 MANAY PO
5 BENCHWARMERS
6 ALL ABOUT LOVE

SM CITY MOLINO
1 ALL ABOUT LOVE
2 XMEN III
3 MANAY PO
4 BENCHWARMERS

SM CITY STA. ROSA
1 BENCHWARMERS
2 MANAY PO
3 XMEN III
4 ALL ABOUT LOVE

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 XMEN III
2 THE OMEN
3 M:I:III
4 POSEIDON
5 MANAY PO
6 AMERICAN SOLDIERS
7 ALL ABOUT LOVE
8 BENCHWARMERS

SM CITY ILOILO
1 BENCHWARMERS
2 RESERVED
3 ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 M:I:III
5 MANAY PO
6 XMEN III
7 RESERVED
8 BANDIDAS

SM CITY DAVAO
1 XMEN III
2 SILENT HILL
3 ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 THE OMEN
5 MANAY PO
6 BENCHWARMERS

SM CITY CAGAYAN
1 M:I:III
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 MANAY PO
4 XMEN III

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

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GALLERIA 632-9116

1 X-MEN 3 • THX
12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:30
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
3 FAILURE TO LAUNCH
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
4 X-MEN 3
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
5 THE DA VINCI CODE
12:30 3:40 6:50 10:00
6 THE DA VINCI CODE
12:00 3:10 6:20 9:30
7 THE OMEN
8 MANAY PO
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
9 CHAOS
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
10 THE BENCHWARMERS
1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30 9:40

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 X-MEN 3
10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00
2 FAILURE TO LAUNCH
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00
3 THE OMEN
4 ALL ABOUT LOVE
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
5 CHAOS
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
6 THE BENCHWARMERS
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 9:50
7 MANAY PO
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 CHAOS
1:15 3:30 6:25 9:00
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
11:30 1:55 4:20 6:45 9:10
3 FAILURE TO LAUNCH
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
4 THE DA VINCI CODE
12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00
5 THE OMEN
6 THE BENCHWARMERS
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
7 X-MEN 3
11:40 2:00 4:20 6:40 9:10
8 MANAY PO
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 THE DA VINCI CODE
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 MANAY PO
4 FAILURE TO LAUNCH
5 X-MEN 3
6 THE BENCHWARMERS
7 THE OMEN

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 X-MEN 3
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 THE DA VINCI CODE
2 X-MEN 3
3 ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 FAILURE TO LAUNCH

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1 THE DA VINCI CODE
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 THE BENCHWARMERS
4 MANAY PO
5 X-MEN 3

LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 THE DA VINCI CODE
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 THE BENCHWARMERS
4 MANAY PO
5 X-MEN 3

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 MANAY PO
2 THE DA VINCI CODE
3 X-MEN 3
4 ALL ABOUT LOVE
5 THE BENCHWARMERS

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 THE OMEN
2 ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 MANAY PO
4 X-MEN 3

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 ALL ABOUT LOVE
2 THE DA VINCI CODE
3 X-MEN 3
4 THE BENCHWARMERS
5 MANAY PO
6 THE OMEN

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270

1 THE BENCHWARMERS
2 THE DA VINCI CODE
3 ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 MANAY PO
5 X-MEN 3
6 THE OMEN

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459

1 THE DA VINCI CODE
2 X-MEN 3 / POSEIDON
3 ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 THE BENCHWARMERS
5 OVER THE HEDGE
6 MANAY PO

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 X-MEN 3
2 MANAY PO
3 ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 THE DA VINCI CODE
5 THE BENCHWARMERS
6 BANDIDAS

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Bading bonding

From page A2-4

Under, over and whatever position and proposition ... who would mind being 'baptized' the Christian V way?

Heart of the matter

AFTER being in the news for months due to many personal changes, **Heart Evangelista** is all set to pick up the pieces and move on. She says there are many things she wants to do, including finish her studies, do another soap opera, record another album and even audition for a role in an international film. Not to mention more product endorsements coming her way.

But one thing she'll never do, she says, is to pose on the covers of men's magazines. She has turned down all such offers. "I want to maintain my sweetheart image," she explains. "Actually, it's not just an image but a lifestyle. I'll go where God takes me."

Horror movies and kissing scenes are also a no-no. "I don't want to open the doors for negative stuff and evil vibes by being part of an anti-Christ film. Even if it was Jericho (Rosales, her boyfriend) that I had kissing scenes with in 'Panday,' I still felt violated 'cause so many people were watching on the set. Enough of that for me. I'm keeping it wholesome."

In Pinoy show biz, where being controversial is the name of the game, isn't Heart too good to be true?

"I want to be different. I'm sticking to my convictions," she says. "I can have good clean fun. I don't want to be caught in the usual vicious cycle. It's tough but it can be done."

Echo inspires her to do all that and more "We are celebrating our first year together. I'm giving him a Louis Vuitton pen. He collects pens. I have no idea what his gift for me is but he told me it has a theme. I hope we can go ice skating together on our special day."

In spite of so many things on her agenda, Heart's heart has a ventricle reserved for Echo alone. Their love echoes in all corners of show biz and beyond!

Glad dad

THE SCRIPT of **Gary Valenciano**'s movie (with his two sons **Paolo** and **Gabriel**) has had to be revised. It's been a while since Mr. Pure Energy was last seen on the silver screen so he wants everything to be perfect. Just as Gary is so spirited onstage, he is in his element when he talks about his kids.

"Paolo is graduating (Mass Media) this year. Gab wants to study music in the US. When I was Gab's age I was still with Kundirana but Gab is already a wiz on the piano and G5. Pao is deep and more of a rocker. Gab is the show biz type."

What advice does he give his boys? To keep personal things personal. If you make everything public, you tend to lose yourself in this business." Their movie is about the ties between father and sons. On and off cam, fatherhood is never farthest from Gary V's heart and mind.

Jolly Sarah

WHAT will happen when two "giants" join forces within a *telenovela*? Viewers are in for a one-of-a-kind delight when Jollibee and ABS-CBN 2 tie up for "Bituing Walang Ningning" starting June 12. It's going to be sort of a reality show in the sense that Dorina (portrayed by **Sarah Geronimo**) will also become an endorser of the popular food chain as she auditions for a singing contest. For she's a jolly good girl 'ah?

All for show

DON'T be deceived by the closeness of **Sugar** and **Edgar Allan**, the Mr. Pogi winner in "Eat Bulaga." An insider told me that, backstage, the two hardly speak to each other Artificial sweetness causes decay in love teams too. So maybe the "Eat Bulaga" tandem should do some brushing up.

(E-MAIL wateringhole shangrila@yahoo.com.)

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 X-MEN 3
MTRCB PG-13
1.00, 3.20, 5.40, 8.00, 10.20

2 OMEN 666
MTRCB R-13
12.00, 2.30, 5.00, 7.30, 10.00

3 FAILURE TO LAUNCH
MTRCB PG-13
12.40, 3.00, 5.20, 7.40, 10.00

4 THE BENCHWARMERS
MTRCB PG-13
1.40, 3.45, 5.50, 7.55, 10.00

PREMIERE THEATRE CHAOS / THE DA VINCI CODE
MTRCB R-13 / MTRCB R-18
1.45, 4.10 / 6.35, 9.40

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice.

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ALL ABOUT LOVE **PG13** 2:30,5:00,7:30,10:00	**FAILURE TO LAUNCH** **PG13** 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:25	**X-MEN: THE LAST STAND** **PG13** 12:50,3:10,5:30, 7:50,10:15
BENCHWARMER **PG13** 1:50,3:50,5:50, 7:50,9:50	**CHAOS** **R13** 2:55,5:20,7:45,10:10	**OMEN 666** **R13** 1:10,3:30,5:50, 8:10,10:30

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1 THE OMEN
1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00
R-13

2 X-MEN 3
12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 8:10, 10:50
PG-13

3 BENCH WARMERS
11:50, 1:50, 3:50, 5:50, 7:50, 9:50
PG-13

4 FAILURE TO LAUNCH
1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00
PG-13

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THEATRE MALL
GREENHILLS

N O W S H O W I N G

1 X- MEN III
11:50 , 2:25 , 5:00, 7:35 , 10:10
PG13

2 THE DA VINCI CODE
12:00 , 3:20 , 6:35, 9:50
R18

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

PROMENADE
GREENHILLS

N O W S H O W I N G

3 FAILURE TO LAUNCH
11:15 , 1:35 , 3:50, 6:05 , 8:20 , 10:35
PG13

4 BENCHWARMERS
10:50 , 12:45 , 2:40, 4:35 , 6:30 , 8:25 , 10:20
PG13

5 OMEN 6+6+6
10:30 , 12:50,3:10, 5:30 , 7:50 , 10:10
PG13

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MUSIC MUSEUM

JUNE 9,10,16,17,23,24,30	NINA... in VERY MANILOW	9:00PM
JULY 8,2006	GLADYS GUEVARA	9:00PM

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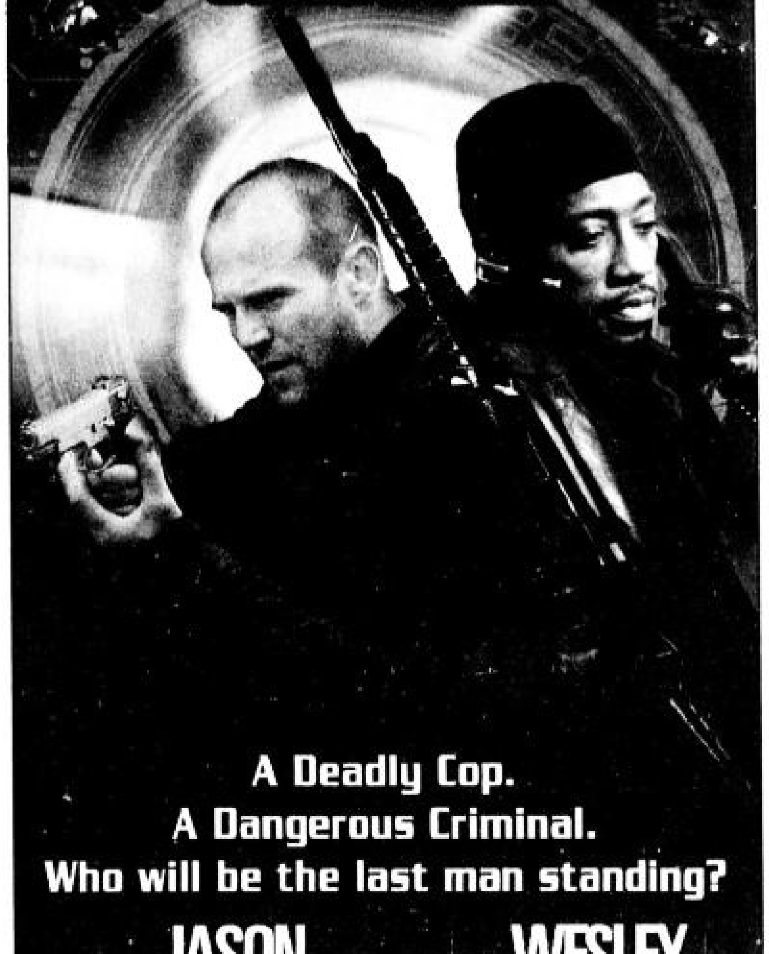

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A Dangerous Criminal.
Who will be the last man standing?

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CHAOS

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THX

G1	GLORIETTA 1	1 ALL ABOUT LOVE	2 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	3 MANAY PO	4 THE DA VINCI CODE			
G4	GLORIETTA 4	1 THE DA VINCI CODE	2 THE BENCHWARMERS	3 THX X-MEN: THE LAST STAND GUARANTEED SEATS	4 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	5 THE DA VINCI CODE	6 FAILURE TO LAUNCH	7 THE DA VINCI CODE
GB1	GREENBELT 1	1 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	2 FAILURE TO LAUNCH					
GB3	GREENBELT 3	1 THX X-MEN: THE LAST STAND GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX FAILURE TO LAUNCH GUARANTEED SEATS	3 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND GUARANTEED SEATS	4 THE BENCHWARMERS GUARANTEED SEATS	5 THE DA VINCI CODE GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	2 FAILURE TO LAUNCH	3 THE BENCHWARMERS	4 ALL ABOUT LOVE	5 THE DA VINCI CODE		
ACC	AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE BENCHWARMERS	2 ALL ABOUT LOVE	3 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	4 THE DA VINCI CODE			
M2	MARKET! MARKET!	1 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	2 FAILURE TO LAUNCH	3 THE DA VINCI CODE	4 ALL ABOUT LOVE	5 MANAY PO		

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Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
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AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
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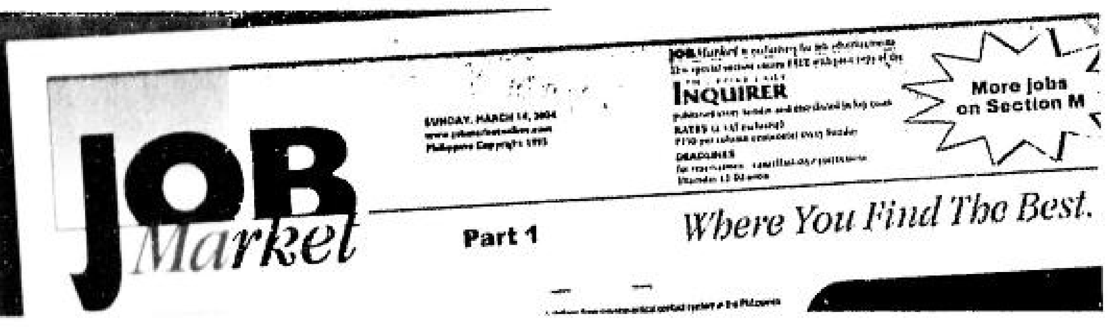

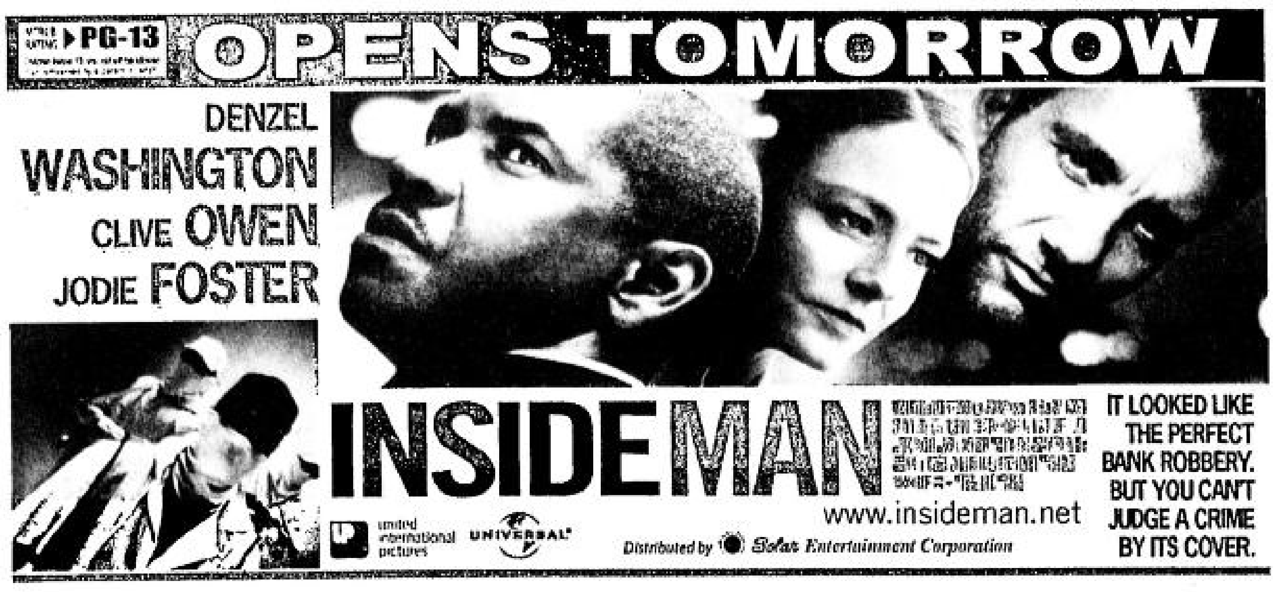
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THE CAST of "Manay Po"

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

'Bading' bonding

REGAL ENTERTAINMENT's "Manay Po" grossed a phenomenal P6 million on its first day.

So at the thanksgiving party thrown by **Mother Lily** at Imperial Palace, everybody was ribbing her, "Mother, bonus Money Po!" But over and beyond the amazing box-office returns, the movie is a triumph because it conveys what every gay person is aching to say but not all find the voice to do.

Cherry Pie Picache, portraying a bewildered lisping mom, makes viewers laugh every time she opens her mouth.

Many people didn't think she could top her Chinese Bisaya character in "Ako Legal Wife" but that's exactly what she does in "Manay Po."

Even if the kissing scene of **Polo Ravales** and **Luis Alandy** was edited out, you can still feel the passion in their scenes as secret gay lovers. So "Brokeback!" Knowing each other like the back of their hand. Wanting to the point of giving the other the power to break your heart.

John Prats is truly convincing as a flamboyant gay that I almost forgot he's straight. Watching **Jiro Manio** in naughty scenes as a confused gay teen made me ask myself if he's the same cute lil' boy who made me cry in "Magnifico." His transformation is indeed magnifico *po*. Catch the blockbuster movie that's "Bading" bonding to the max!

Christian experience

WHAT makes **Christian Vasquez** so appealing is that he's a *probinsiyano* boy trapped inside a gorgeous hunk's body! Any woman would feel protected with him around and yet still feel the need to baby him whenever he sidles up to her with his *malambing* Ilonggo **charms. No wonder Keanna Reeves** is said to be very fond of Christian. They are starring in Seiko Films' "I Want To Be Happy."

I cornered him for the real score. "Keanna is a beautiful person inside out," he said, "but I haven't thought about courting her."

Does he go for "aggressive" types like her? "It's good to be the underdog sometimes," he admitted, laughing.

BADING/A2-2

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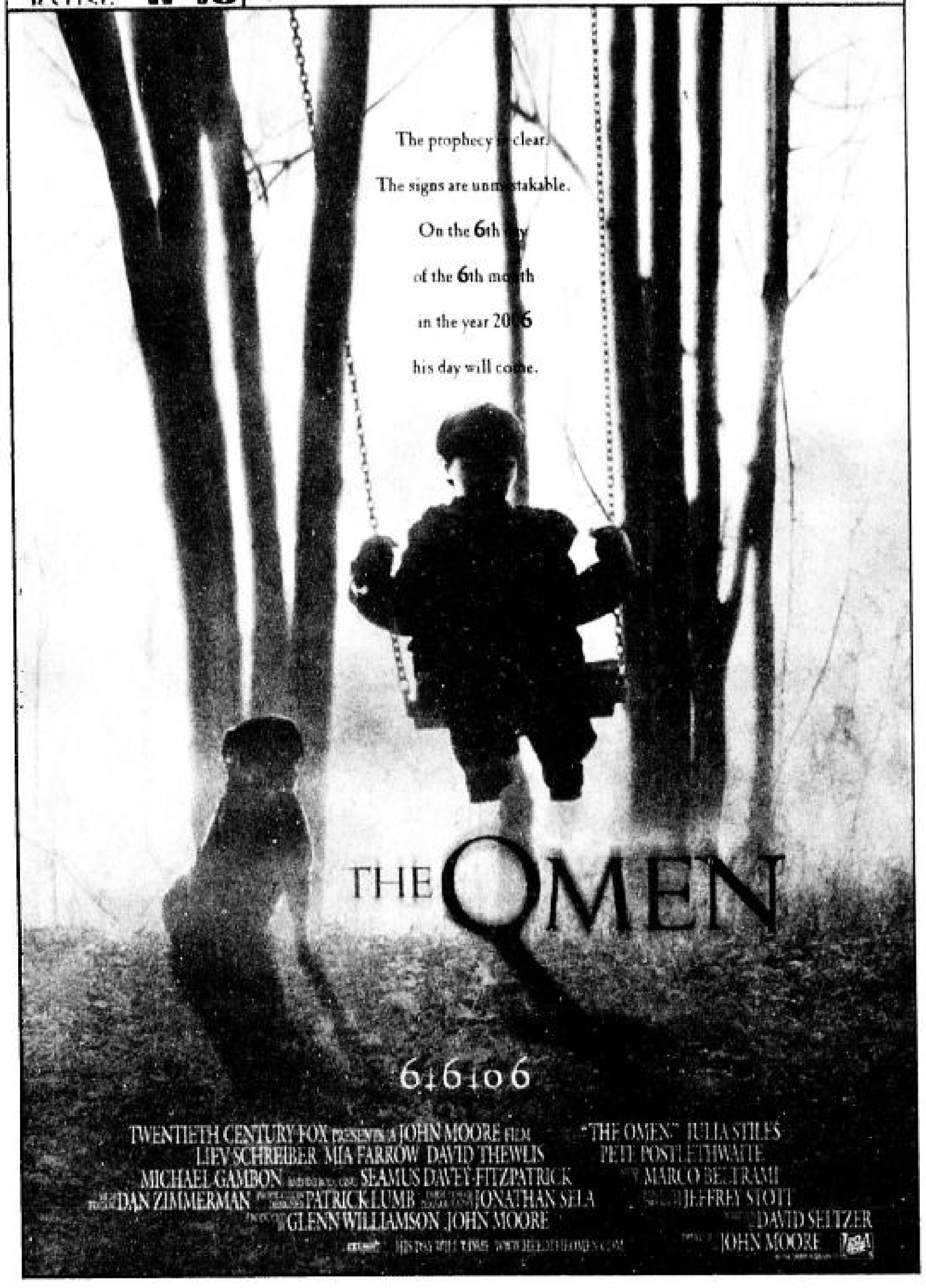
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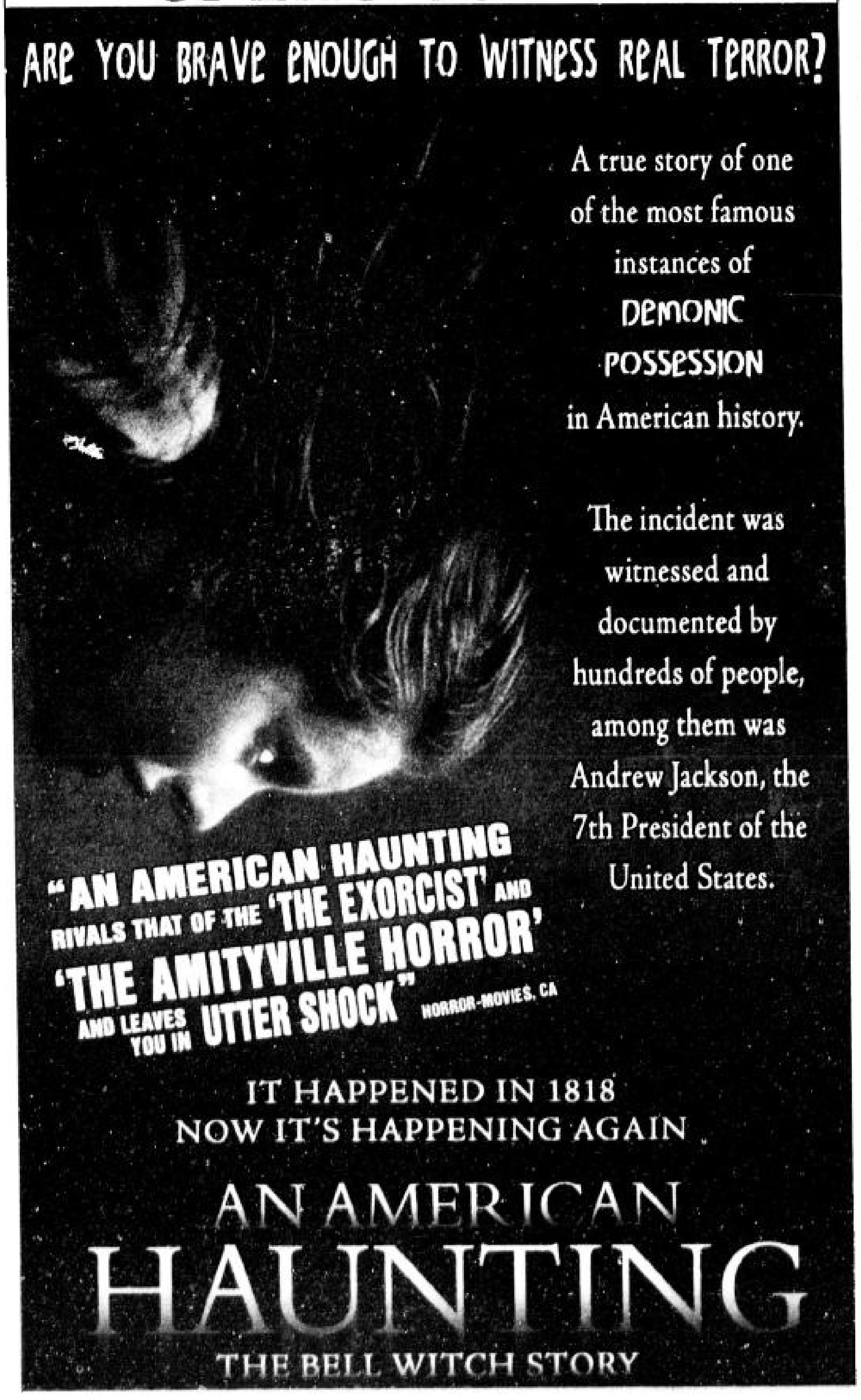
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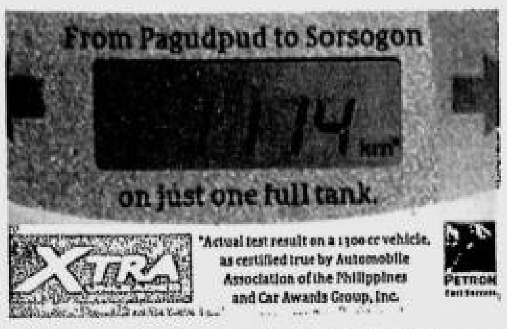
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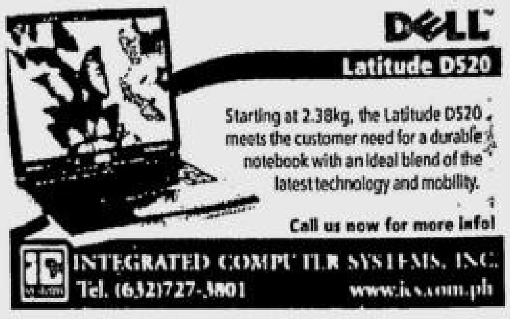
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Gov't to review BIR bid for lower goal

Transfer of ₱50B of target to Treasury likely

By Michelle V. Remo

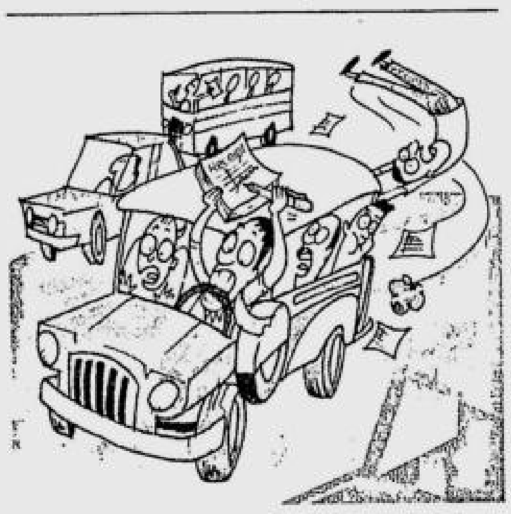
THE INTER-AGENCY DEVELOPMENT BUDGET COORDINATION Committee (DBCC) will review the Bureau of Internal Revenue's plea for a lower tax collection target for 2007, acknowledging there could be merit in the BIR's claim that the goal was too high.

A ranking Finance official said the DBCC, tasked with setting the government's economic and fiscal targets, would meet in the middle of the month to discuss whether the P793-billion collection target for the BIR next year was reasonable.

BIR officials led by Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag yesterday met with representatives of the Department of Finance, head agency of the BIR, to justify its request for a much lower target for 2007.

The DOF, which earlier expressed reluctance to change the revenue targets,

GOV'T/B4



Bus, jeepney drivers may issue receipts, too

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE (BIR) is planning to require drivers of public utility buses and jeepneys to issue receipts to passengers, a move intended to complete its crackdown on tax delinquent operators and plug huge revenue leakages from the transport sector.

The plan will follow the BIR's move to require taxi drivers starting next month to issue receipts using improved taxi meters. Officials said the BIR and the Land Transportation, Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) are all set to monitor compliance of taxi operators and drivers on the tax-collection drive.

Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag told reporters that soon after the government has successfully implemented its tax program for taxi operators, the revenue agency would conduct a similar initiative for owners of buses and jeepneys.

"We have to improve collection from the transport sector. First, what we will do is clean up and update our (BIR's) database on operators," Buñag said in an brief interview.

The official, however, could not give the estimated revenue losses from the tax delinquency of transport operators, but he said the amount could be substantial given the flaw in the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) that operators take advantage of to reduce their tax liabilities.

Under the NIRC or the tax code, a 3-percent common carriers tax is imposed on transport operators' gross income. The minimum amounts of gross income that operators of jeepneys, buses and taxis may declare for a given quarter are listed in the tax code.

BUS/B2

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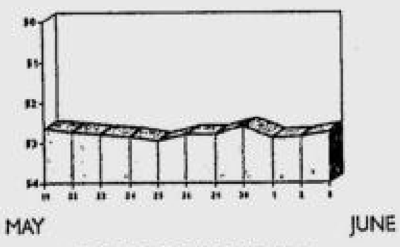

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As of 5 p.m., June 5, 2006

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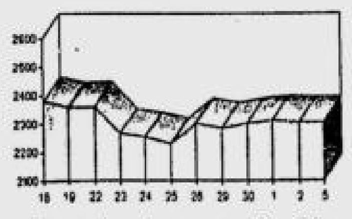

(See stock market report on Page B4)

Stocks end flat

SHARE PRICES CLOSED FLAT YESTERDAY in sluggish trade, with some bargain hunting helping to offset concerns about the government's ability to achieve its fiscal targets, dealers said.

They said reports that the government was under pressure to reduce next year's revenue targets were most unwelcome given the sensitivity of the budget deficit issue and efforts to put the state's finances on a stable footing.

The composite index ended up 0.24 points at 2,304.41 after trading between 2,303.55 and 2,312.92. Volume was 1.17 billion shares worth P1.42 billion.

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RP registered BOP deficit of $277M in April

Peso firms up against dollar as currency markets rebound

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS YEAR, the Philippines posted a balance of payments deficit of $277 million in April—a reversal of last year's surplus of $105 million—due to debt servicing outflows, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

But because of the surpluses posted in earlier months, particularly in January when the Philippines sold $2.1 billion worth of global and euro bonds in the offshore capital market, the BOP from January to April remained at a surplus of $1.84 billion.

"[The deficit was] due to repayments of maturing national government and BSP obligations," BSP Gov. Amando Tetangco Jr. said. "But January to April (surplus) is still sizeable."

The four-month BOP surplus this year stood much higher than the $887 million posted during the same period last year.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the domestic economy and the rest of the world. Its major components are the current account, and the capital and financial account.

Meanwhile, the peso yesterday firmed up against the US dollar, moving farther away from the psychological barrier of P53:$1, as regional currency markets rebounded and fears over US interest rates waned.

As a weaker-than-expected US jobs growth in May revived expectations that the US Federal Reserve's monetary tightening cycle was at the tailend, the peso closed stronger at 52.725 versus Friday's 52.85 against the greenback.

The peso joined an across-the-board recovery by other Asian currencies such as the Japanese yen, Singapore dollar, Taiwanese dollar, Korean won, Thai baht, Indonesian rupiah and Malaysian ringgit.

Stocks end flat

From page B1

The all-shares index advanced 1.80 points to 1,443.23.

Gainers outnumbered losers 47 to 34, and 41 stocks were unchanged.

"There's not much news to support the market's recovery and worries whether the government can achieve its revenue targets have somewhat dampened sentiment," said Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities Inc.

Reports yesterday said that the Bureau of Internal Revenue has officially asked the government that its tax collection goal for this year and next be reduced by 17 percent to P661.5 billion.

The agency accounts for nearly 70 percent of state tax collections.

Economists have warned that failure to meet government's fiscal goals would likely push up interest rates and also quash hopes of an upgrade in the country's credit ratings.

"The government needs to clarify this situation as the uncertainty is bond market unfriendly," said ING economist Tim Condon said in a note to clients.

Most active Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. lost P15 at P2,000.

Ayala Corp. gained P5 to P402.50 on a technical rebound while unit Ayala Land Inc. was unchanged at P13. Bank of the Philippine Islands shed 50 centavos to P54. *AFP*

The goad father

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

THERE IS A NEW TWIST IN THAT celebrated "rape" of that bank of every Filipino workingman, the third largest Equitable PCI Bank.

For quite sometime, everybody in business was watching First Gentleman Miguel Arroyo as the SM group's deal sponsor, i.e., "godfather!"

In a previous column, I reported there was some suspicion in business that Mike Arroyo was on top of the SM group's design to take over EPCIB for a song.

But it turns out, based on reports, the "godfathers" of mall operator Henry Sy's SM group are actually Bernardino Abes and Diosdado Macapagal Jr.

Said to be like a father to Gloriaetta, Abes was the labor secretary of Gloriaetta's father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal.

Abes is now chair of GSIS, whose president and general manager Winston Garcia is nevertheless fighting the SM group takeover.

Now Abes was also the chair of SSS when, a few months before the 2004 presidential elections, he called for a SPECIAL meeting of the SSS board to sell its EPCIB holdings to the SM group at a basement bargain price of P47 per share.

As for Diosdado Jr., a.k.a. "Buboy," his most distinguished accomplishment was having been born a brother of Gloriaetta.

I heard that the two "godfathers" goaded people in the judicial system to rough up Trans Middle East (TMES), a minority owner of EPCIB.

* * *

In mysterious haste and with perfect timing, the Sandiganbayan disallowed TMES from voting its EPCIB shares in the recent annual stockholders meeting.

The Sandiganbayan came out with the surprise just a day before the meeting, reportedly thanks to the efforts of the "godfathers."

Yet in 1998, the Sandiganbayan allowed TMES to vote on the same shares.

Not only that, five years later, in 2003, the same Sandiganbayan ruled that the PCGG sequestration of the same shares was illegal.

In effect, the Sandiganbayan had ordered the lifting of the sequestration.

Of course, the PCGG had to file a motion for reconsideration. And this has been dragging for the past three years or so.

Suddenly from out of the blue, as if on cue—meaning, only three years later and a day before the EPCIB stockholders meeting—the Sandiganbayan dug up an old TRO. The Supreme Court issued it about, oh, only 10 years or so ago.

But the Sandiganbayan said that, because of the three-year-old PCGG motion, everybody should just go back to that 10-year-old TRO.

Without much ado, EPCIB chair Corazon de la Paz (also SSS boss) and the new SM-installed corporate secretary Sabino Acot interpreted it all to mean that TMES, as a stockholder of the EPCIB, did not have the right to be represented on the board.

Tsk, tsk, tsk. Were they reinventing the legal wheel or what?

* * *

Remember that huge blocks of shares in multibillion-peso businesses such as PLDT, Philcomsat, and San Miguel were also under PCGG sequestration.

Yet those who claimed to own the shares were allowed to vote on them in annual stockholders meetings for the past 15 years.

Again, those were huge blocks of shares, and the TMES holdings in EPCIB were so small, they could only put ONE director to the board.

So what made TMES different?

Aha, the representative of TMES, Martin Romualdez, who was already booted out as EPCIB chair, was basically also against the "rape" of the bank, for the simple reason that it was WRONG.

And the bank only happens to be owned—more than 40 percent—by the working class members of the SSS and the GSIS.

Yet this cute administration does not seem to care. We, the SSS and GSIS members, can only thank those two cockro ... *este*, "godfathers" *pala*.

* * *

To Rep. Jose Salceda, who is fast rising to the position of top lapdog of Gloriaetta, this cute administration cannot lower the collection target of the BIR, because doing so will worsen poverty in this country.

WHAAAT? I thought that it's the other way.

Down here in my barangay, we grew up believing that if the BIR imposes less tax, we get to keep more of our own money. We then have more money for food, clothing and shelter.

There is another way to help reduce poverty. And it is in the hands of congressmen, like Salceda. Maybe our hero should just give up his multimillion-peso PORK.

The truth is, congressman, the BIR suggestion to lower the collection target has nothing to do with poverty. It only has everything to do with fairness.

For instance, the Bureau of Customs gets credit for some P27 billion worth of VAT that it collects on imported oil.

Yet the same P27 billion is considered part of the BIR collection—and not of Customs'—when the government set the collection target of the BIR.

Thus, that's P27 billion less in the BIR's actual collection but P27 billion more in its target.

Get it, sir?

* * *

Of course, BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag should still run after the tax cheats. Take the case of this huge insurance group called "Prudential."

I remember that during the time of the man named Band, Wrist Band, it was reported in the news that the BIR had accused the Prudential group of tax evasion.

Involved was some P800 million in unpaid documentary stamp tax.

Again, that's a whopping P800 million!

What happened to the case? It's been about eight years now, and we, the taxpayers down here in my barangay, are anxious to know.

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Oracle says telco sector will become more challenging

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL TELECOMmunications sectors are expected to become more challenging in the next five years, with competition and price pressures expected to affect companies significantly, officials of IT firm Oracle Corp. said.

Their views reflected that of research group IDC Philippines. In a recently released study, IDC predicted that competition in the local telecommunications industry will continue to rise all the way until 2010, making it more difficult for companies unless they enter into strategic partnerships.

"The telecommunications industry is at a unique inflection point," Oracle vice president Lars Wahlstrom said in a briefing. "[It] is undergoing radical transformation and will continue to evolve in the next five years."

Apart from competition and price pressures, the Oracle official said that "powerful technology disruptions like network-information technology convergence" will also drive change in the industry.

Oracle classifies the Philippines as a quasi-growth market which has significant potential for higher mobile phone and wireless service penetration, but is also reaching a plateau with the current second-generation network offerings.

With mobile phone users approaching 35 million, the Philippines still has untapped potential for growth, considering neighbors like Taiwan have a penetration rate of almost 100 percent of the population.

Oracle officials believe that the key to tapping the unserved portions of the local telecommunications lies in innovation similar to value-added services that allow mobile phone users to make financial transactions from their phones.

Oracle's vice president for communications Ash Khalek said that the company is investing heavily in the telecommunications industry, given its growth potential.

In the Philippines, Oracle works with Globe Telecom Inc. and the Philippine Long Distance Telephone co. and its wireless unit Smart Communications Inc.

Meanwhile, the IDC study heralded similar findings, saying that the local industry must adapt to the coming technological and market challenges.

"Moving forward, the marketplace will continue to be even more competitive," senior analyst Karen V. Rondon said. "As price points continue to decline, service providers can no longer be dependent on incomes generated from subscriptions alone, but also have to focus on offering value-for-money services."

Bank acquires 21% of Victorias

DEUTSCHE BANK AG LONDON YESTERDAY acquired 36.88 million shares of sugar mill operator Victorias Milling Corp. equivalent to 21.65 percent of the company's outstanding shares.

Bank officials did not say whether they acquired the shares for their own account or on behalf of a client.

In its disclosure, VMC said that it learned of the acquisition from its stock and transfer agent, Fidelity Stock Transfers Inc.

The last transaction was processed last May 25.

VMC asked the Philippine Stock Exchange to be granted a period of 10 days from June 5 within which to submit the required ownership report for the transaction.

The Lucio Tan Group, according to sources, said that it was not involved in the transaction.

VMC is embarking on a restructuring plan, hoping to restore its profitable business and settle its debts over the next 10 to 15 years.

In 1995, VMCs's financial troubles started due to increased foreign and local competition, and losses arising from unprofitable nonsugar business ventures.

Later, the Securities and Exchange Commission allowed VMC to suspend its debt claims and undergo rehabilitation. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Bus, jeepney drivers ...

From page B1

But Buñag said the minimum amounts had been set years ago and were outdated. Even so, many transport operators declared incomes equivalent to the minimum amounts stated in the tax code, and thus pay substantially lower taxes.

For instance, the tax code states that operators of jeepneys plying Metro Manila may declare gross income of at least P2,400 a quarter. Public utility buses may declare quarterly income of only between P3,600 and P7,200 depending on seating capacity.

Because PUV drivers do not issue receipts, the BIR has no way to prove that they earn much more than the minimum amounts stated in the tax code.

Buñag said that if PUV operators would be required to issue receipts and if the BIR would implement a tight audit of their income declarations, then they would be forced to pay the right taxes.

The BIR chief said that the International Monetary Fund would be sending a team this month to implement its technical assistance program on how to improve the BIR's tax collection effort.

He said that part of the program would be to determine the proper guidelines on how jeepney and bus operators would issue receipts and how the BIR should monitor their compliance. *Michelle V. Remo*

DBP to float hybrid bonds worth $100M-$130M

Bank also readies sale of ₱9B worth of assets via SPV

By Doris C. Dumlao

STATE-OWNED DEVELOPMENT BANK OF THE Philippines plans to brave the offshore capital market with a perpetual bond offer of up to $130 million within the next 30 to 45 days.

In a press briefing yesterday, DBP president Reynaldo David also said that as part of the bank's bid to improve its balance sheets, it would bid out P9 billion worth of assets by August under the revived Special Purpose Vehicle framework.

The bank is working with its financial advisor, Ernst & Young, to reduce its bad assets. DBP has about P8 billion worth of nonperforming loans and P4 billion worth of foreclosed assets.

After raising P2.35 billion in supplementary or tier 2 capital early this year, which raised the bank's capital adequacy ratio (CAR) to 23.6 percent, David said the bank would pursue the plan to issue $100-$130 million worth of hybrid bonds that should qualify as core or tier 1 capital. After this exercise, to be arranged by Deutsche Bank and Barclays, its CAR is seen to increase further to 30 percent.

Hybrid tier 1 capital instruments have equity-like features that made them acceptable as tier 1 capital. They may be in the form of unsecured subordinated debt or preferred shares with step-up feature.

The bank was scheduled to hold road shows in Singapore, Hong Kong and London last May 15 but this was preempted by a sell-down on stocks and bonds issued by emerging markets. Now that the market has started to stabilize, David said he was "extremely confident" there would be strong investor interest in Philippine issues.

He said there was renewed demand for emerging market securities in the global market.

David added that the bank's strong performance should make its bonds attractive to global investors and fund managers.

In the first four months of the year, he said DBP had posted a net profit of P1.62 billion, almost double the P850 million posted in the same period last year.

During the same period, DBP's assets went up by 29.9 percent to P224.35 billion while net worth rose by 12.3 percent to P22.83 billion over a year ago.

"We remain focused on what we have to do. We are keen on generating scale on all our activities. We have to make sure we have adequate scale to remain strategic, relevant and true to our charter. Our developmental side is definitely set to kick into higher gear this year," David said.

Despite a generally sluggish loan demand in the country, DBP's total loan portfolio increased by 7.45 percent to P87.4 billion during the first four months of the year from last year's level.

The Japan
Industry of
GENER
A

TRADE Secretary Peter B. Favila (right) talks to Japan Ambassador to the Philippines Ryuichiro Yamazaki after briefing members of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines Inc. on the current economic state of the country. Favila cited the favorable ratings given to the Philippines by different ratings agencies and the sectors where the Philippines has a competitive edge.

DAR seeks soft loans worth ₱17.6B

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN IS negotiating with multilateral donors for project loans worth P17.6 billion in the next five years.

This would ensure that support services, such as infrastructure and basic social services, would be maintained in areas covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program despite the possible conclusion of the program in 2008, Agrarian Reform Undersecretary Gerundio "Khaliq" C. Madueno said in an interview yesterday.

Madueno said new projects had been proposed for funding of the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

"We are now in talks (with these institutions. Soft loans worth P8.4 billion might be obtained from the ADB; $90 million (P4.7 billion) from the World Bank and P4.5 billion from JBIC," Madueno said. "The donor community is willing to support us even beyond 2008."

After the lands were distributed to farmer-beneficiaries, support services including farm-to-market roads, bridges, irrigation and post-harvest facilities, new farm technologies and capacity-building training , and basic social services (potable water, health and installation of school buildings) were made available in their communities to make them self-sufficient, he said.

He said that out of the 3 million beneficiaries of CARP nationwide, only 954,000 had access to direct support services.

The DAR has been implementing 3,590 foreign assisted projects worth P42 billion since 1993. Of the total, 2,319 had been completed.

Cemex launches education projects

CEMEX PHILIPPINES Foundation launched its proeducation projects that would benefit more than 10,000 public elementary and high school students in the National Capita Region (NCR) and Cebu in school year 2006-2007.

Under these projects, computerization, IT training and intensive reading programs will be undertaken in six public elementary and high schools in Antipolo, Quezon City, Manila, Naga and Cebu.

The project will be done in partnership with the Manuel Roxas High Schools, the Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development (FitED), Ayala Foundation Inc.-Gearing-up for Internet Literacy and Access to Students, and Sa Aklat Sisikat Foundation, Inc. (SAS).

Sen. Mar Roxas, Nelia Lardizabal (assistant principal of Manuel Roxas High School Manila), Jaime Ruiz de Haro (Cemex Foundation president), Evangeline "Luli" Arroyo (FitED director for strategic development), Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala (Ayala Foundation cochair), Margarita Delgado (SAS Foundation president) attended the signing of the memorandum of agreement on the project recently at the Manila Peninsula.

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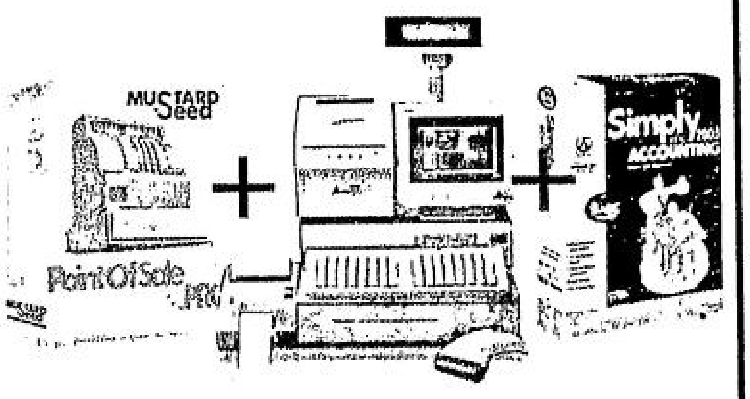

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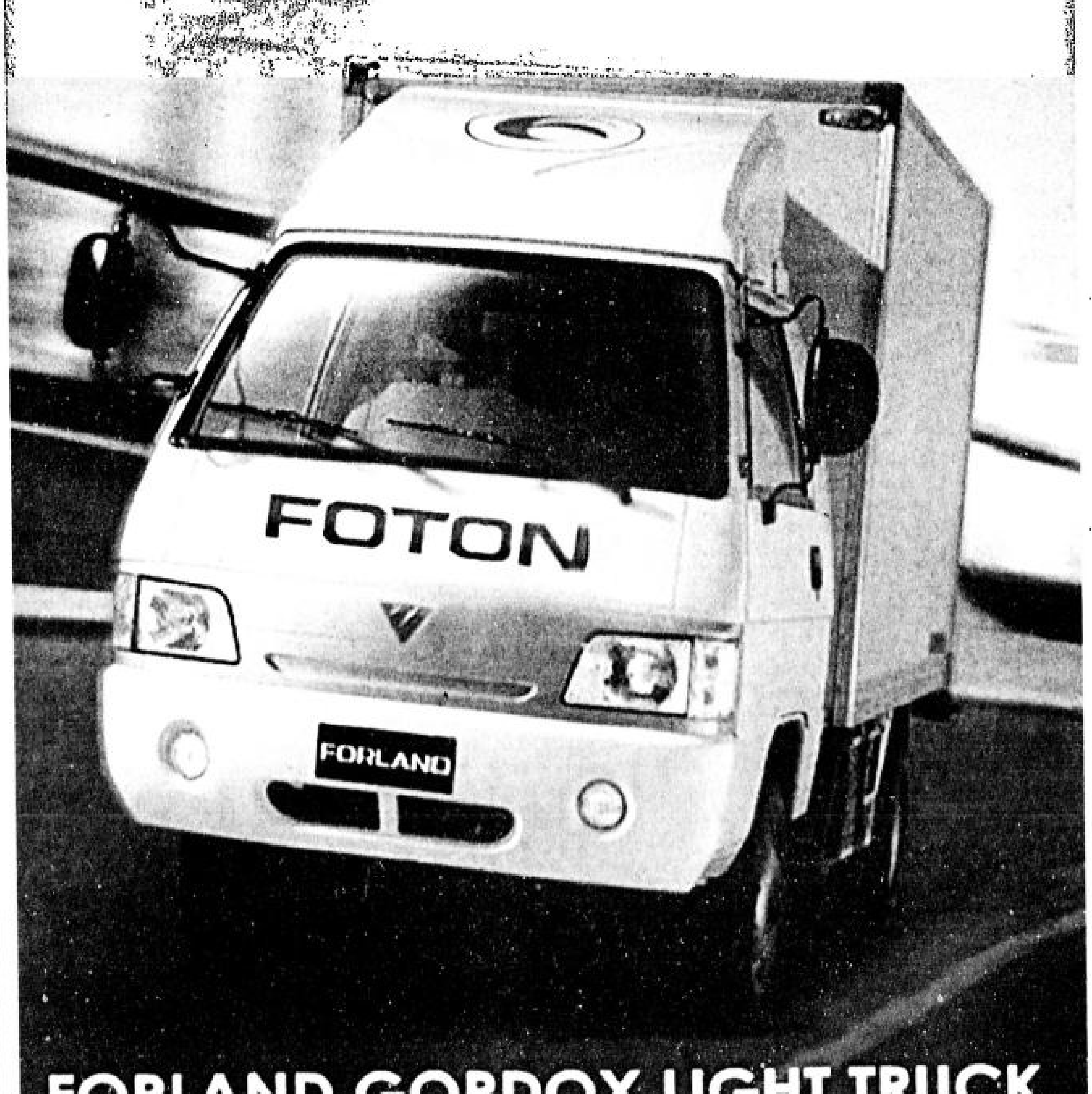

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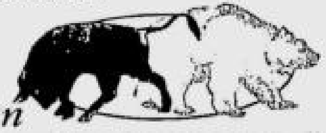
Fed undecided on what to do next

MR. BEARBULL



Ron Nathan

WE DECIDED TO VISIT THE MALL OF ASIA yesterday. Getting there by taxi was no problem and cost P100. The mall is beautifully designed and considerably larger than the Megamall. The array of goods was very colorful and spaciously set out. It compares favorably with the malls in Singapore and that is quite a compliment. We bought a number of items, mainly for our new home.

There were, however, serious problems resulting from the huge number of visitors. Taking your car is not an option as there is nowhere to park and you just drive round and round getting more and more frustrated. Once inside, the mall is overcrowded to such an extent that when you want to eat, you must be prepared to queue up for a long time, usually in the blazing sun outside.

I was hoping to try the Super Bowl of China, which was recommended to me, but we couldn't get near the place. The fast foods were just as bad and the longest queue was at McDonalds. Eventually, we waited half an hour, in another fast food only to find there were no tables. National Book Store was so full that I found a book I wanted but all 10 tellers had lines stretching about 50 feet. In the end, I gave up.

The mall is currently a victim of its own success. The most annoying part was going home. The taxis were asking P300 to P500, even for short distances. I hope that someone will put a stop to this scam otherwise visitors will not return. This used to happen at the airport until the authorities appointed a taxidermist to set up an office, which had variable fares to different destinations. Taxis lined up, you paid the office and obtained a receipt. That way, you paid the taxis and the taxis paid their taxes.

* * *

It has been a traumatic fortnight for the United States, Europe and especially the emerging markets, not just the Asian region but also Brazil, Russia, India and Mexico. In the week before last, no less than $5 billion worth of stocks were sold and this affected not only the stock markets but also the currencies. In the first three days of last week, the selling moderated but there was still a net outflow.

For the moment, the outlook appears to be stabilizing, as the Dow and the Nasdaq recorded three good consecutive sessions. But the latest news from the United States suggests that the economy may be slowing down. In May, only 70,000 new jobs were created, less than half of the 150,000 expected and far below the average of 180,000 a month over the past year.

Factory orders in May declined 1.8 percent and the Institute of Supply Management index also dipped slightly. The hourly wage remained unchanged and total pay, including overtime, was a fraction lower so inflation does not appear to be an immediate threat. However, the government is planning to raise the minimum hourly rate from $5.25 to $7.15 and that will be inflationary. The trade deficit widened so the government will probably continue its policy of benign neglect of the dollar.

Because the data are so conflicting, the minutes of the Federal Reserve, released last week, show that the members are undecided as to whether they should raise interest-rates this month to 5.25 percent or take a breather. The futures indicate a 74-percent chance of a rate increase but I rate it about even money. Fed Chair Bernanke is walking a tightrope because the economy appears to be stalling but not too much can be read into one month's figures.

Whatever he does, other countries are going to raise their interest rates. Europe will do so this month and will probably increase rates twice more before the year ends. China is trying to cool the booming property market by increasing the down payment to 30 percent and they have also warned of an increase of 0.25 percent or 0.50 percent later this year. Even Japan, now having emerged from a 7-year recession, might soon abandon its zero interest rate.

With other countries raising rates to protect their currencies against an ever-declining dollar, it is a no-brainer that the Bangko Sentral will follow suit during the next year. I was therefore surprised that the market took it so badly and while the NIKKEI and the HANG SENG both rose 250 points on Friday, the PSEi actually declined 6 points.

Peso bonds of 5 years or longer suffered sizable falls in recent weeks and the holders of P300 billion sold to them by the banks cannot be feeling very happy at the moment. The yield on the 2013 bond is now over 10 percent. This looks quite attractive but some fund managers are waiting for a second wave of selling, which will push up yields by another 1 percent. Currency traders are recommending buying the Singapore dollar and the Malaysian ringgit and selling the Indonesian rupiah, the Thai baht and the Philippine peso.

To make matters worse, JP MORGAN downgraded our bonds from OVERWEIGHT to NEUTRAL, which means from BUY to HOLD. FITCH RATINGS came out with a long statement, critical of the government's system of collection. Our ratio of tax revenue to our economy ranked 95th out of 96, not a passing grade.

In an act of desperation, the government is getting PAGCOR and PHILWEB to offer five P100,000 prizes weekly to overseas workers who remit their money through official channels. I don't know what they hope to achieve by this. It certainly won't make up for the P7.7-billion shortfall by the BIR and another increase in the price of oil will put pressure on the government to subsidize it to up to P5 billion.

Commodity prices have dropped sharply in recent weeks and shares such as PHILEX have tumbled from P5.90 to P3.60 as gold fell from just over $700 an ounce to a low of $618 before recovering to $638. The main driving force is the outcome of the talks between the United States and Iran. They are being offered a stick and a carrot. They can either accept incentives, which have not been made public, or they can face sanctions. Personally, I do not think they will give in easily.

Until we know what the FEDERAL RESERVE will do and whether Iran will accept the proposals or not, I expect the market to consolidate. If you are holding cash, hang on to it. When the direction of the market is unclear, it is better to stay liquid. *mrbearbull @ hotmail.com*

Union Bank completes iBank purchase

SHAREHOLDERS OF COMMERCIAL LENDER International Exchange Bank (iBank) made a windfall of P13.4 billion from the sale of their combined 98.8-percent stake in the bank to Aboitiz-controlled Union Bank of the Philippines through a series of deals at the stock exchange yesterday.

Data from the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) showed that iBank shares were sold in seven block sales totaling 315 million shares at P42.50 each. The sales were brokered by Wealth Securities, Campos Lanuza & Co. and Fidelity Securities. iBank closed at P42 a share yesterday.

Union Bank earlier signed a memorandum of agreement with iBank shareholders JTKC Equities Inc., iVantage Corp., Razon Industries Inc. and Greenhills Property Ventures to acquire their combined stakes representing more than 67 percent.

Shares affiliated with the selling shareholders of iBank drew mixed reactions from stock investors.

iVantage closed lower by 1.5 percent at P1.28 a share yesterday. Sources at iVantage said its gains from the sale of roughly P1.5 billion would be used for possible investments in the financial sector.

Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp. rose 6.9 percent to 31 centavos. The Lanuza group of iBank are also majority shareholders of Philrealty through Greenhills Properties Inc.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

ADB GRANT FOR RP COOPERATIVES. Finance Secretary Margarito Teves and Tom Crouch, country director of the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Philippine country office, exchange documents after signing a $900,000 grant assistance agreement to help develop cooperatives in the country. Financed by the ADB's Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, the project will strengthen the institutional capacity and efficiencies of the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), which oversees financial cooperatives in order to provide sustainable microfinance services for the poor.

BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING

Ayala forms new IT venture

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

AYALA CORP., ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S biggest conglomerates, is forming a subsidiary that it will use as a vehicle for potential investments in the technology-laced business process outsourcing (BPO) sector.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Ayala managing director Renato Marzan said they have filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission the articles of incorporation and by-laws of a wholly owned subsidiary, "LiveIT Solutions Inc." No details were given.

Ayala has been involved in technology-related investments through another subsidiary, Azalea Technology Investments Inc. Azalea is an investor in technology-related firms in the country. Azalea ended 2005 with a net loss of P101 million due mainly to provisions for its investment in a call center company, Globalstride, as well as losses of other units.

Azalea International, a wholly owned unit of Azalea, has likewise made key investments in companies such as chip designer SiRF.

Azalea International continues to invest in technology companies through venture capital funds Narra Venture Capital LP and Tech Venture Partners III Ltd. Narra is a joint venture with Tallwood Partners LLC, a leading investor in emerging technologies based in Silicon Valley.

Narra has invested in companies developing semiconductors, converged communication systems, computing platforms and software services.

Another Ayala technology-oriented subsidiary, Ayala Systems Technology Inc., is a systems integrator and information technology services provider to domestic and international markets. As a systems integrator, ASTI combines skills in supporting different products and platforms with its experience in managing large projects. As an IT services provider, ASTI offers a wide range of products and services such as hardware, network and communications infrastructure, software tools, business software applications, software design and business process outsourcing.

Gov't to review BIR bid for lower goal

From page B1

decided to bring the matter to the DBCC for resolution. The DBCC is composed of the DOF, the National Economic and Development Authority and the Department of Budget and Management.

The BIR specifically requested that its target for next year be set at only P661.5 billion, or P131.5 billion lower than the original goal of P793 billion.

In the DBCC's review of the BIR's 2007 target, Finance officials said it would consider transferring more than P50 billion of its collection target to the Treasury, which is also a revenue-collection agency.

The P50 billion represents documentary stamp taxes on government securities programmed for next year. The source said the BIR reasoned out that since the Treasury was the agency withholding the taxes on treasury bills and bonds, then the target amount of tax collection from those securities should be assigned to it.

Buñag had said that a P661.5-billion target for next year would assume a 10-percent growth from the P601.4 billion that it could potentially collect this year. The BIR said a 10-percent growth was more reasonable growth.

But even the 2006 tax collection target of the BIR is still subject of debate. The DOF has given the BIR a target of collecting P675.4 billion this year, 11-percent higher than the BIR's request of P601.4 billion.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the DOF did not see any reason to change the BIR's target for 2006; although it was amenable to a DBCC review of the 2007 target.

Buñag said in a letter to the DOF that there was something "fatally wrong" with the way the BIR's targets were set.

He said P27 billion of the BIR's target this year should be transferred to the Bureau of Customs to represent value-added tax on imported oil.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of June 1, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	6.1	6.1	6	6	3,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	36	36	35.5	36	135,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	54.5	55	54	54	858,000
China Banking Corp.	875	905	875	905	3,110
Citystate Savings Bank	20.25	20.25	20	20	1,100
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.42	0.42	0.41	0.41	3,580,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	72.5	72.5	71	72	239,800
International Exch. Bank	41	42	41	42	73,900
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	36.5	36.5	35	35	415,600
Philippine National Bank	33.5	34	33	33	48,600
Phil. Savings Bank	39.5	39.5	39	39	7,300
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	18.5	20.75	18.5	20.25	481,900
Security Bank Corp.	51	52	50	51	134,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	48	48.5	48	48.5	175,400
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	200,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	32	32	32	32	10,000
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	10,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2100	2110	2100	2110	1,650
Ivantage Corp.	1.32	1.38	1.28	1.28	21,607,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	46.5	47	46	47	72,500
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	45.5	47	45.5	47	215,500
Manila Electric Co. A	14.75	15.25	14.5	14.75	95,200
Manila Electric Co. B	23.25	23.25	22	22	912,600
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7.2	7.4	7.2	7.4	951,000
Petron Corp.	4.2	4.25	4.2	4.2	2,465,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	190,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	70,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.75	23.75	23.5	23.5	41,200
Jollibee Foods Corp.	35	35	34.5	34.5	37,600
Pancake House Inc.	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.9	53,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	95,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	64	63.5	64	57,400
San Miguel Corp. B	71.5	71.5	71	71.5	167,200
Universal Robina Corp.	19.75	20	19.75	19.75	842,100
Vitarich Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	200,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	610,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.3	1.32	1.3	1.3	315,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.75	4.75	4.7	4.7	2,975,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	60,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.09	0.095	0.09	0.095	1,500,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	15,000,000
Ayala Corp.	400	405	397.5	402.5	56,060
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.7	5.7	5.5	5.6	55,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	5,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.6	4.05	3.6	3.95	3,554,000
APC Group Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	1,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.9	0.91	0.9	0.91	570,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	20,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.5	20,300
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.12	1.14	1.06	1.06	12,349,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.9	4	3.9	3.95	849,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.2	286,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	40,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	6.6	6.7	6.6	6.7	633,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	10,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.135	0.135	1,680,000
SM Investments Corp.	226	228	226	227	222,160
South China Resources Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	20,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	400,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	20,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	13.25	13.25	12.75	13	4,820,100
Belle Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.16	1.16	621,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	1,400,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2.02	2.04	2.02	2.04	177,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.59	0.59	2,810,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	20,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.42	1.48	1.42	1.46	3,862,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.56	1.6	1.54	1.56	17,471,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.23	0.23	0.22	0.22	4,780,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	10,000
Primex Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	60,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.5	14,200
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.31	0.34	0.3	0.31	7,280,000
SM Development Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	215,000
San Miguel Prop. Inc.	38.5	38.5	38.5	38.5	200
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.1	8.2	8.1	8.2	2,766,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.0775	0.0775	0.0775	0.0775	1,700,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	15.5	15.75	15.5	15.5	61,800
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	1,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.26	1.26	1.24	1.26	1,531,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	905	915	905	910	14,280
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.65	3.7	3.6	3.7	959,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2015	2015	2000	2000	89,800
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	1,500,000
Ionics Inc.	2.1	2.7	2.1	2.7	8,376,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.42	1.44	1.14	1.3	1,495,000
Philweb Corp.	0.032	0.033	0.032	0.033	285,000,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	75,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	24,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	14	14	13.75	13.75	3,005,500
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	180,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.3	1.32	1.3	1.32	33,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	550,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.5	1.5	853,000
Manila Jockey Club	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	20,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.6	0.62	0.6	0.6	260,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	3,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.1	2.1	76,000
Paxys Inc	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.75	159,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	81,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	7	7.2	7	7	794,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.3	7,830,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	4,780,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	14,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.023	2,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	132,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	3.55	3.65	3.45	3.65	6,101,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	3.6	3.65	3.55	3.65	7,010,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	10,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	1,290,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	162,400,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.16	1.22	1.16	1.2	838,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.16	1.2	1.16	1.2	60,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	16.75	16.75	16.25	16.5	289,600
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series AA	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,800
PLDT 10% Pref Series CC	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,300
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	15.5	15.75	15.5	15.75	259,500

DISCLOSURES

THE BOARD of Directors of **A. Soriano Corp.** has approved a special cash dividend of P1.50 per share for stockholders of record as of June 20, payable on July 14.

***

LAWRENCE C. Qua, Corazon S. de la Paz, Jan D. Doets, Virginia Judy Q. Dy, Guillermo D. Luchangco, Meliton C. Qua, Raymond C. Qua, Leonardo T. Siguion Reyna and Yang Tah Lu have been elected directors of **Ionics Inc.** Meanwhile, Alfredo R. de Borja and Edgardo M. del Fonso have likewise been elected as independent directors.

***

MAKATI Finance Corp. has appointed SGV & Co. as its external auditor for the year 2006. The board has also approved the declaration of P0.023 cash dividend per share for stockholders of record as of June 29, amounting to a total of P1,829,104. ***Compiled by Kate Pedroso, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

June 5, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.773694	1.000000	52.8460
Japan	Yen	0.006933	0.008961	0.4736
United Kingdom	Pound	1.457099	1.883300	99.5249
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.099728	0.128898	6.8117
Switzerland	Franc	0.640794	0.828226	43.7684
Canada	Dollar	0.703294	0.909008	48.0374
Singapore	Dollar	0.491547	0.635324	33.5743
Australia	Dollar	0.581026	0.750976	39.6861
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.052294	2.652590	140.1788
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.206296	0.266638	14.0908
Brunei	Dollar	0.489990	0.633312	33.4680
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000108	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.020313	0.026254	1.3874
UAE	Dirham	0.210672	0.272294	14.3896
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.292500	68.3035
Argentina	Peso	0.251608	0.325203	17.1857
Brazil	Real	0.340235	0.439754	23.2392
Denmark	Kroner	0.134098	0.173322	9.1594
India	Rupee	0.016941	0.021896	1.1571
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.212612	0.274801	14.5221
Mexico	New Peso	0.068408	0.088417	4.6725
New Zealand	Dollar	0.488289	0.631114	33.3519
Norway	Kroner	0.128767	0.166431	8.7952
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012874	0.016639	0.8793
South Africa	Rand	0.115537	0.149332	7.8916
Korea	Won	0.000816	0.001055	0.0558
Sweden	Kroner	0.108525	0.140268	7.4126
Syria	Pound	0.014904	0.019264	1.0180
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024178	0.031250	1.6514

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aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Aries Espinosa

Take the Deuter Genius to school

A CHILD SHOULD NOT CARRY MORE THAN 10 percent of his body weight, but if he has no choice, he should not go beyond the limit of 20 percent. Yet, it is common sight to see children carrying school bags that are obviously heavy and even bigger than they are.

A heavy load in a backpack can cause the child to lean forward and this distorts the natural curves in the middle and lower back, causing muscle strain and irritation to the spine joints and the rib cage. But kids do not get neck and back aches the way adults do, so it is only when a child hits adolescence that back problems may start to escalate.

Carrying a heavy bag does not really damage or deform a child's spine or bones but merely encourages poor posture as the child is hunched all the time. It is possible that poor posture will cause aches and pains when the child develops the habit of slouching which causes strain to the neck and back. When this posture is carried on to adulthood, he may suffer the pains even more.

Parents should look into getting a good ergonomic bag for their child so that despite the heavy load, their child can stand up straight. Correct posture is important in children as they will carry this over into their adulthood.

A suitable backpack like the Deuter Genius is better than a shoulder bag because the child carries weight that is distributed evenly on both sides of his body.

Some tips on buying a suitable backpack:

- Buy a backpack that is appropriate for your child's size. The biggest backpack is not ideal even if you think it will hold more items that your child has to carry to school.
- Choose a backpack that has a molded frame and adjustable hip strap, so that the weight will rest on your child's pelvis instead of the shoulders and spine.
- Choose a backpack with shoulder straps that are wide, padded and adjustable. The back of the bag should be padded for comfort, and the material should be made of lightweight material.
- The backpack should have compartments for easy storage and access frequently used items.

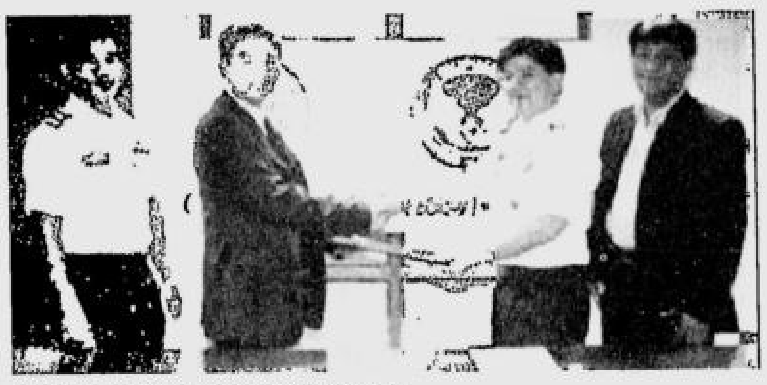
Pack it and let them carry it right:

- Teach your child to carry the backpack correctly.
- Always use both shoulder straps and wear the backpack on the back, not on one shoulder.
- Pack heaviest items first so that they are carried lower and closest to the body.
- Adjust the straps to fit the backpack near the child's body. The bottom of the bag should be about four fingers above the waist and the top of the bag is just below the base of the skull. Do not let them carry the backpack low near the buttocks.
- Teach your child to lift the backpack up by bending the knees and using the leg muscles instead of bending with knees straight and reaching with the arms. The bag must be close to the body when attempting to lift.
- Teach your child not to lean forward when walking. When the child still leans forward even after you have coached him not to, then you know that the bag is too heavy for him.

Deuter Genius is available in selected Chris Sports branches nationwide. Visit www.chrissports.net.

BDO AWARDED BY EUROMONEY

Euromoney 2005 Real Estate Awards named Banco de Oro Universal Bank as the Best in Commercial Banking in the Philippines for financing of real estate developments through loans booked and other forms of financing arrangements. Shown receiving the award is BDO president Nestor Tan (center) flanked by Michael Dragoyevick (deputy publisher, Euromoney London) and Marcus Langston (director of publishing Asia - Euromoney magazine).



PLDT, PAF INK AGREEMENT

PLDT and The Philippine Air Force (PAF) recently signed an agreement for PLDT Internet access services to e-enable the Armed Forces. This partnership is part of the PAF's continuous drive towards fulfilling the vision to make the PAF 'a professional and competent Air Force responsive to national security and development.' Shown during the rites are (standing from left): Director for Information Systems, OA-6, Major Samuel M. Angot PAF; PLDT sales business head Renato L. Castañeda; Assistant Chief of Air Staff for Communications Electronics and Information Systems, A-6, Colonel Edgardo C. Mendoza, (GSC) PAF; and, PLDT relationship manager Christopher A. Cordero.

SLIMMERS WORLD INT'L MR & MS BIKINI BODIES '06

Slimmers World International, the country's leading slimming and Fitness center, just concluded the 9th edition of the popular Mr & Ms Bikini Bodies at the Coconut Plaza, Roxas Boulevard last April 1, at 6 p.m. 31 candidates from Slimmers World branches across the metropolis participated in the prestigious event. Both the Mr & Ms Bikini Bodies winner each took home the grand prize of P25,000 in cash and a trip to Boracay alongside the title. Winners are: Mr & Ms Bikini Bodies - Benjamin Umali (SWI Pasig) and Sheila Balbacal (SWI SM City), shown in photo; 1st runner-up - Jay Mingi (SWI Alabang) and Karen Simbulan (SWI Pasay Road); 2nd runner-up - Arvin Balonzo (SWI Adriatico) and Bob Casasola (SWI Pasay Road). For more information on Slimmers World International, log on to www.slimmersworld.com.ph or call their hotline at 536-3333.

F&B MANUTECH EXPO 2006

8TH
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The Philippine Society of Ventilating, Air-Conditioning and Refrigerating Engineers (PSVARE) and the Training Institute for Manila Engineers (Time) Foundation Inc will hold the 8th International Food and Beverage Manufacturing and Technologies Expo on June 21 to 23 at the PICC Forum, CCP Complex, Pasay City. In photo are Int'l F&B ManuTech project director Mayose Gozon-Bautista, PSVARE president engineer David Farala, Time Foundation president engineer Cesar, PSVARE past president engineer Rosendo Perez Jr. and PSVARE external vice president engineer Eric Panzo. Interested exhibitors can call 687-0654 or 687-3292, e-mail cut@pacific.net.ph or log on to www.foodandbeverage-manutech.com.

Better English, better opportunity

ONLY 3 OF 10 FILIPINOS CAN speak English. This was revealed by the first quarter nationwide Social Weather Station (SWS) survey. The 1,200 respondents surveyed signified a decline in all aspects of language proficiency, most importantly on the ability to speak English, compared with the results 12 years ago. More striking was the fact that only five per cent of the adults surveyed said they make full use of English.

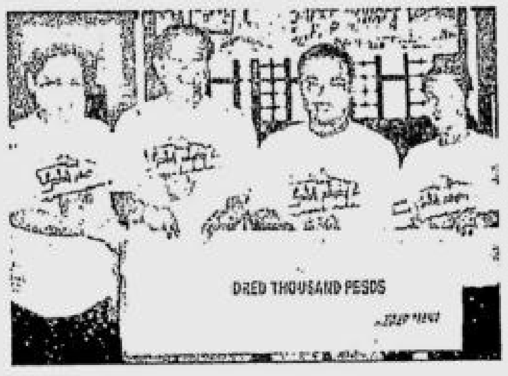
But the result of the recent SWS survey is no big secret. The Personnel Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP), the premiere human resource management organization in the country, representing more than 1,000 member companies and HR practitioners nationwide, earlier announced that a significant number of job hunters fail the initial interview because they do not project themselves well. Since the interviews are conducted in English, their lack of ability and confidence to speak English are obviously a major factor in their chances to make it to the cut. Knowing the competitive business world, a good command of English is simply a must.

Back up with 34 years as the country's top trainer in communication, Speechpower never wavers in its vision of honing English proficient Filipinos. It continues to commit in creating a positive impact in the lives of modern Filipinos. It believes that better English spells better opportunity.

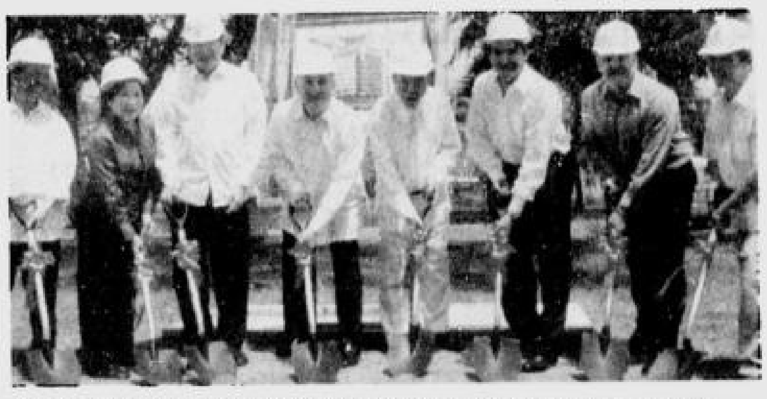
From its original one course, Speechpower has successfully developed a curriculum program with three major categories: aptitude in oral, written, and reading comprehension. Under each category, specialized programs have been designed with strict classification of participants depending on the level of needs from pre-school up to professional levels, from conversation practice to fluency, intensive pronunciation, vocabulary enrichment, grammar review, speed reading and comprehension, public speaking and leadership training, journalistic, creative, business, and technical writing, effective broadcasting, and power presentations. All for the benefit of its enrollees: from housewives to corporate executives, from toddlers to teachers, from nursery to graduate students, from budding to self-made entrepreneurs, from regular guys to prominent personalities. Special arrangements on IELTS, TSE, TOEFL, and TOEIC review are also available.

This June, discover the power of speech. Be an English proficient Filipino. Enroll with the leader. Speechpower is strategically located at Speechpower-Joshua Building, 932 Aurora Boulevard, near corner 20th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City (911-0832 to 34); 4/F Dona Amparo Building, Espana corner Cataluna Streets, Sampaloc, Manila (735-7256/735-7312/735-7262); 3/F Esther Building, 1945 Taft Avenue, Malate, Manila (521-3601/525-5310), and 2116 Buendia corner Taft Avenues, Pasay City (833-2921/833-2836).

2ND WINNER OF P100,000 IN MINOLA PROMO



A service crew member from Urdaneta, Pangasinan becomes the second weekly winner of P100,000 in the Sarap Manalo, Sarap Minola promo of Minola Cooking Oil. Norman Valendiano's winning entry was the promo code on the Minola Cooking Oil half-gallon bottle he purchased. San Pablo Manufacturing Corp executives April Ocampo, product manager and Mario Sahagun, area sales manager for North and Central Luzon were present during the awarding. Sarap Manalo, Sarap Minola is a consumer promo based on texting. To join, one has to key in the unique promo codes found in Minola products. All text messages must be sent to 2966. Prizes include P100,000 for the weekly draws, and P1 million in the grand draw. Promo period is from March till August 2006.



PIONEER HOUSE CEBU AT CEBU BUSINESS PARK

The Pioneer Group of Insurance Companies led by its flagship company Pioneer Insurance and Surety Corporation (PISC) together with its construction team Freyssinet Phils, Arkitektii Phils, Davis Langdon & Seah Phils (DLS), and Educardo Arrojado & Associates (ECAA) recently held groundbreaking rites to formally begin the construction of the nine-story Pioneer House Cebu. Located on Cardinal Rosales Avenue in Cebu Business Park, Pioneer House Cebu will provide over 6,500 square meters of office space by the second quarter of 2007 to meet the increased requirements of the Cebu business district. Photo shows (from left): PISC senior vice president and head of branches Fred Agor, PISC senior vice president and head of accounting Sally Ong Pac, PISC president and CEO David Coyukiat, PISC chair Ernesto Chan, Freyssinet Phils president FF Cruz, Arkitektii Phils managing director architect Alfredo Caritativo, DLS managing director Alan Hearn and ECAA president engineer Eduardo Arrojado.

KIPLING OPENS AT SM MALL OF ASIA

Photo taken during the Blessing and Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony led by Greyhound Marketing Corp's director, Ko Hu; Kipling-Belgium representative, Kevin Yeung; Greyhound Marketing Corp's general manager, Benjamin L. Go; TV host and commercial model, Christine Bersola-Babao; together with Fr. Marnecio Cuartero. The SM Mall of Asia outlet is the second store of Kipling to open this year. It shall carry a wider range of Kipling products which every bag enthusiast should watch out for. And what makes Kipling-SM Mall of Asia a sure hit is that shoppers can have the chance to see the cuddly Kipling Giant Monkey named 'Jim'. The 1.4-meter high stuffed toy shall surely put a big smile to both kids and adults who will visit the store. The Kipling-SM Mall of Asia is located at the 2nd Flr., South Wing, Main Mall Building. Visit also Kipling-SM Megamall located at the 2nd floor, Mega A Building.

Does your web hosting provider give you a host of benefits?

YOUR WEBSITE MAY HAVE BEEN professionally designed, what with its enticing content and captivating visuals, all laid out in a manner that suits your customer needs. However, are you certain that your site can be accessed anytime, without interruption or delay? Can you count on your web hosting provider to respond to your queries and act on your concerns 24/7?

These are some of the things that you should consider before you entrust your web hosting needs to a solutions provider. ServoBox Hosting Company, the country's leading provider of web hosting solutions particularly for small and medium scale enterprises, encourages companies and individuals to be extra wise in choosing their web hosting provider.

According to Ryan Yu, chief technology officer of ServoBox Hosting Company, a web hosting provider should guarantee you with: more than 99.5 percent uptime; lightning-fast network connectivity; more-than-enough disk space and bandwidth ; 24/7 customer support from the experts.

ServoBox Hosting Company is backed with all these features and more, making it the preferred web hosting solutions provider by those who want to enjoy more value from their money. On top of these, the company extends affordable packages to its customers. Their basic package only amounts to P542 per month which is already inclusive of 20 e-mail accounts and 500 MB with control panel among other perks. ServoBox also offers dedicated server packages for companies who require larger resources for their website. What's more, the company also gives away free Motorola c117 or Nokia 1100 cell phone for every client that signs up for hosting.

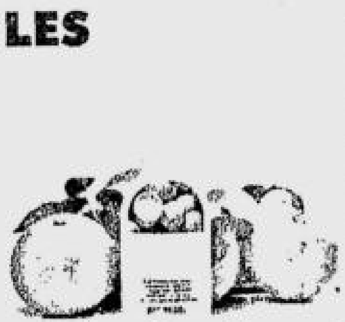
ServoBox Hosting Company is a division of WebFocus Solutions Inc.

Visit www.servobox.com or call 631-5202 for more information.

More PEP on page B7

Product FILES

The 'a-peeling' truth about orange



EVERYBODY IS FAMILIAR WITH what they are. Everybody knows that they are nutritious, healthy and one of the best sources of Vitamin C. But there's a lot more to be peeled from this citrus fruit. Orange was once considered as "the fruit of the Gods"; when they were referred to as the "golden apples" that Hercules stole. Back in ancient times, people in the Orient thought oranges are sacred and used its juice and peel as antidote from numerous poisons. People from the west believed that oranges and orange blossoms are symbols of love. During the 17th century, the ladies of the French court used oranges in cosmetics. Now, science has discovered another use for orange. The peel of oranges can be used to whiten the skin. Pureform cosmetics, manufacturer of Renew Placenta, has adopted this discovery and has introduced the freshest whitening soap in the Philippines - Orange Peel. Yes, enough of the papaya colors hubbub because as of today, Orange is the new white! Made naturally from peels of orange, Orange Peel contains Vitamin C and Vitamin E. It also has Lipaese-a molecule that selects and dissolves keratinase protein that accumulates on the skin surface. With Orange Peel's all natural composition, it is definitely more than just a whitening soap. It moisturizes, exfoliates, detoxifies and protects the largest organ of the body. Thus, continued usage of Orange Peel, will guarantee a healthier, whiter and younger-looking skin. For inquiries: Call (632)743-2467/0917-817-6736

Sportswear with genuine Italian flair

SINCE 1959, ELLESSE has been defined by spirit and style. It began when an Italian tailor, Leonardo Servadio, fused a passion for skiing and tennis with a flair for couture. This resulted in skiwear and tennis collections that looked as good as they felt and fitted as well as they performed. Servadio first branded his garments with the initials L.S., which then became the brand name "Ellesse". A new concept was born: exclusive performance-led sportswear, brilliantly tailored with genuine Italian flair. Over forty years later, these values are still evident in everything Ellesse does. Visit Planet Sports, The Athlete's Foot outlets and Duty Free or call 898-1933 to 42 for more information about Ellesse products.

ROSALINA 'DEWEE' AGGABAO HARN

Beloved of **Frank** (†), *peacefully passed away in the grace of our Lord on Sunday, June 4, 2006.*

She was an active member of the August Twenty One Movement (ATOM) and former member of the Movie and Television Ratings and Classification Board (MTRCB).

Dewee's vibrant spirit will forever be remembered and missed by her family and friends:

Children – **Patty, Stevie** & **Trisha, Chay, Richie**
Brother – **Esteban**
Sisters – **Margarita, Teresita, Evelyn, Lourdes**
Grandmother – **Stella**
Grandchildren – **Arianne, Alex, Andrea, Aidan**
Brother-in-Law – **Robert** & Family
Sister-in-Law – **Gigi** & Family

Dewee's wake is at the Magallanes Church in Makati, Chapel 3. Cremation will be on Wednesday, June 7, 9:00 p.m. at the Loyola Memorial Park, Guadalupe, Makati. Burial will be on June 8 after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Magallanes Church.

Our Beloved

EMMA VILLARUEL ENDRIGA

Peacefully joined our Lord
on June 3, 2006 at the age of 59.

Emma was an employee of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas for 30 years. She won over cancer for18 years.

She is survived by her husband,
Quezon City Treasurer **Victor B. Endriga, PhD**

Children
Carmela & Enrico Honrado
Cherry & Roland Valerio
Victor Jr. & Cathy Endriga

Grandchildren
Erica, Eunice & Eliza Honrado
Rachelle & Rovic Valerio

The wake will be held at the Sanctuario de San Antonio,
Forbes Park, Makati City.

Interment will be held this Saturday, June 10, 2006
after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Manila South Cemetery.

We request our pious readers to pray
for the eternal repose of **Mommy Emma**.

-"Even when I walk through a dark valley,
I feel no harm. For you are at my side, your rod
and staff give me courage..." **Psalm 23:4**

Luz Advincula-Bautista

of Dumalag, Capiz

Passed away in the grace of our Lord
on June 4, 2006 at the age of 96.

Her husband Magin (†);
Children Edgardo & Carrie, Ervin (†) & Leda,
Delia (†); Grandchildren Jojo & Marivi,
Bobby & Ludette, Annette & Derick,
Ma. Christina, Edwin & Cherry,
Eduardo & Aida; great grandchildren,
other relatives and friends request your prayers
for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state
at Capilla de San Francisco,
Santuario de San Antonio Parish, Forbes Park,
Makati City. Funeral Mass will be held
at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, June 7.
Interment will follow
at the Loyola Memorial Park,
Sucat, Parañaque.

Justice Bernardo Lloren Salas

(Retired Justice of the Court of Appeals)
of Jagna, Bohol and Cebu City

Peacefully joined his Creator on June 2, 2006 at the age of 75.

His wife **Lourdes ''Daisy'' Caseñas**, children **Boy & Stella, Maribel, Maritess & Ronald Alambra** and **Marilou & Noel Tamase**; grandchildren **Bodie, Iki & Abbie, Gina & Sarah** and **Paolo, Patty, Brian, Bianca & Miguel,** together with surviving brothers **Dr. Bonifacio, Dr. Nonie,** sisters **Dr. Lourdes Endangan, Pet Du** and **Marietta Pimentel**, brothers- and sisters-in-law and nephews and nieces, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Cebu Rolling Hills Memorial Chapels, A.S. Fortuna St., Banilad, Mandaue City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, June 7, 2006 at Cebu Memorial Park, Banilad, Cebu City after the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at 1:00 p.m. at St. Therese Church, Lahug, Cebu City.

TEOFILO SOLIS ATANGAN, JR.

Rosario, Cavite
Retired Auditor, Commission on Audit
Died on June 3, 2006 at the age of 73.

His bereaved wife, **Bella Abueg**; Children **Toti & Joy Sapin, Sheila & Alan Pajarillaga, Oyie & Mike Monzon**; grandchildren **Derrick & Teowill, Angela, Bianca**; brothers & sisters & in-laws request the pious readers to join them in prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at 132 Biac na Bato St., Rosario, Cavite.

Interment will be on June 9, 2006 (Friday) at CSP Memorial Park after the 2 p.m. mass at Rosario Parish Church.

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†

Our Dearly Beloved

Jose A. Jamoralin, Sr.

1st Lt. USAFFE
Ret. Philippine Army
(Sept. 1, 1918 – June 2, 2006)
of Sorsogon, Sorsogon

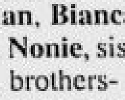
peacefully joined our Lord at the age of 87.

His beloved wife **Lourdes** (†) ; children **Leopoldo, Leonardo, Jose Jr., Roberto, Raul, Efren, Eduardo, Grace, Agnes** & in laws; brother **Rodolfo, Sr.**; sister **Ester**; grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives & friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at their family residence in Burabod, Sorsogon, Sorsogon.

Interment will be on June 10, 2006.

We design OBITUARIES for free,



An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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INVITATION TO A PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE AND SEALED BIDDING

Interested parties are hereby invited to a **PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE** and **SEALED BIDDING** for the supply of 69kv breakers for the upgrading of the protective devices of BENECO's Atok 5 MVA Substation, Bulalacao 3.75 MVA Substation and Sinipsip 5 MVA Substation.

The **PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE** will be held on **June 15, 2006** at **10:00 A.M.** at the Punctuality Hall, BENECO Building, DPS Compound, Utility Road, Baguio City where the technical description and specifications and other related matters will be discussed.

Prospective bidders must submit their Company Profile: Income Tax Returns and Audited Financial Statements for the past three (3) years and Track Record.

SEALED BIDS must be received on or before **June 29, 2006 at 10:00 A.M.** at the Punctuality Hall, BENECO Building, DPS Compound Utility Road, Baguio City. **OPENING OF BIDS** will be on the same date, time and venue.

Only those who were present during the Pre-Qualification Conference and who submitted the above-enumerated requirements will be allowed during the Bidding Proper.

BENECO reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid most advantageous to the BENECO.

THE PBAC

(PDI–June 6, 2006)

PHILIPPINE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS NAVAL LOGISTICS CENTER
Fort San Felipe, Cavite City

02 June 2006

INVITATION TO BID

The Philippine Navy is inviting interested proponent to purchase thru public bidding on "as is where is basis" the following unserviceable equipment, machineries, vehicles and assorted scrap:

Nomenclature	Location	Date/Time		Price of Application Form
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline for Submission/ Opening of Bids	
Lot 1 Unserviceable Assorted Equipment and Machineries **(WMR-PN-008-05)**	Naval Logistics Center, FSF, Cavite City	9:00 AM June 07, 2006 (Wednesday)	9:00 AM June 14, 2006 (Wednesday)	Php 500.00
Lot 2 Assorted Scrap Iron Consisting: ICE, GSM, Electrical/Electronics Spare parts **(WMR-PN-009-05)**	Naval Logistics Center FSF, Cavite City			Php 500.00
Lot 3 Unuseable/Used Oil (Approximately 39,480 ltrs) **(WMR-PN-004-05)**	Naval Petroleum Depot Sangley Pt., Cavite City			Php 500.00
Lot 4 Fishing Boat (FB-1503) **(WMR-PN-010-04)**	Back of HNSSC, FSF, Cavite City			Php 500.00
Lot 5 Fishing Boat (1501) **(WMR-PN-009-04)**	Back of HNSSC, FSF Cavite City	9:00 AM June 07, 2006 (Wednesday)	9:00 AM June 14, 2006 (Wednesday)	Php 500.00
Lot 6 One (1) unit Unserviceable Small Craft: FB Calypso **(WMR-PN-012-05)**	Back of HNSSC, FSF Cavite City			Php 500.00
Lot 7 Ex-BRP Catanduanes (PG-62) **(WMR-PN-006-03)**	Back of HNSSC, FSF Cavite City			Php 500.00
Lot 8 Two (2) units Unserviceable Small Craft: LCM-281/LCM-279 **(WMR-PN-009-03)**	Back of HNSSC, FSF Cavite City			Php 500.00

All interested proponents are advised to attend the Pre-Bid meeting on June 07, 2006 aboard Multi-Purpose Hall, Naval Sea System Command (NASSCOM), Fort San Felipe, Cavite City.

For other particulars, please contact the Secretariat, Philippine Navy Disposal Committee (PNDC) at Naval Logistics Center, Fort San Felipe, Cavite City or call (046) 431-0204.

FOR THE CHAIRMAN, PNDC

(Sgd.) **CDR EULOGIO P LUTERIA PN**
Secretariat, PNDC

(PDI–June 4, 5 & 6, 2006)

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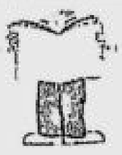

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OBITUARIES

PLECILA ALTOBAR GEMINA
(Aling Seding)
Pendulunan, Baroy,
Lanao del Norte

Peacefully joined our Creator on June 2, 2006.

Her body lies at Funeraria ni Uro,
A. Bonifacio St. Cainta, Rizal.

Interment is to be scheduled on June 9, Friday

We are calling all her family members and relatives to visit her wake. You may contact Marilyn at 0920-9212646
for more information

Belen "Baby" Nieva Reyes, OCDS

Lucena City & Marinduque
January 2, 1937 - June 4, 2006

Her loving husband Engr. **Mariano Z. Reyes**
Children: **Rochi & Luisa, Maribel, Monching & Dia, Christine** and **Kay & Jay.**
Beloved grandchildren: **Tara & Alexa; Samantha & Ralph; Makeila; Matthew, Patricia & Kathryn**
Parents **Jose & Pacencia Nieva (†)**
Brothers & Sister: **Jose, Jr.** (†), **Ricardo** (†), **Antonio** (†), **Ramon** (†), and **Vicky**, her husband **Luis Magpantay**
other relatives & friends

Her remains lie in state
at Bishop Alfredo Ma. Obviar Bldg.,
St. Ferdinand Cathedral Compound, Lucena City.

Interment will be on Saturday, June 10, 2006
Funeral Mass at 9:30 A.M. at Carmel of St. Joseph,
Lucena City.

Please omit flowers.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

Felisa Panlilio Tiangco

The beloved eldest sister of the late Florita and Eduardo
Esteemed President and Principal of Arayat Institute
Selfless Past President of
The Children of Mary Immaculate,
The Legion of Mary,
Mother Butler's Guild
Apostolado ng Panalangin,
Vocation Committee for Priests and
Pampanga Association of Principals and Assistant Principals

Died in the Grace of our Lord on June 4, 2006

Her sister-in-law, **Salud**, her niece and nephews **Winnie** and **Chito, Clinton** and **Rosanna, Reno** and **Jeanie, Joey** and **Trixie** and **Dennis** and her cousins give thanks to the Lord for blessing them with her love and affection.

Her remains lie in state at the Santa Catalina Church
in Arayat, Pampanga.

Interment will be on June 6, 2006 at 4:00 p.m.
at the Arayat Catholic Cemetery
following the 1:30 p.m. mass at
the Santa Catalina Church.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT
MESSAGE OF THANKS
DEATH ANNIVERSARY
REQUIEMS
FREE OBIT DESIGN

People, Events & Products

Monterey MVP on Wheels goes to Baguio

AVID HOMEMAKERS AND SERIOUS cooks are invited to become part of Monterey Meatshop's MVP on Wheels special cooking demonstration featuring culinary expert Morella Reynoso - Gala to be held on June 17, from 3 to 6 p.m. at the Multi Purpose Hall, Baguio Country Club in Baguio City. The event hosted by SMC All Stars Joey Sta. Maria and Ed Cordero will showcase easy-to-do recipes along with valuable tips for preparing delightful meals using choice Monterey products. Participants are also in for exciting raffle draws and games with fun prizes. Registration starts at 2 p.m. Admission is free. Special gift packs await the first 100 registered participants. MVP on Wheels is a series of cooking demonstrations spearheaded by Monterey, the country's leading brand of fresh and quality meat products, to boost its promotional efforts nationwide. As the trusted source of quality meat products, Monterey provides a rare opportunity for its 15,000 members nationwide to enjoy full benefits of being a MVP Club member. For inquiries on how to join, call (02)633-MEAT or visit Monterey Meatshop: Tiongsan Baguio - 1 Harrison Road Baguio City Tiongsan La Trinidad - Km 4 La Trinidad Benguet.

Jollibee Kids Club Bee Day

TWO DAYS BEFORE THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE Day, hundreds of kids from all over the country will create history as they take part in their own version of "revolution" via Jollibee Kids Club (JKC) Bee Day! Big Day ng mga Batang Bida. This first kiddie congress will be the largest get-together of Jollibee Kids Club members from all over the country. In this fun-filled event, children from Metro Manila, Pampanga, Naga, Cebu and Davao will have simultaneous investitures. Highlighting this kiddie convention is the nationwide oath taking of JKC members, as they promise to spread happiness by imparting good values. The event will also unveil the largest hand-painted mural made by Jollibee kids to symbolize the unity in diversity especially among Filipino kids. Heading the nationwide kiddie affair is the convention at the Araneta Coliseum Big Dome, with Toni Gonzaga and Epy Quizon as hosts. Fun and Jollitreats will mark the BEE-g Dome celebration. Keeping the Jollibee festivity to an exciting level are guests Rachelle Ann Go, and Little Big Star champs Sam Concepcion and Rhap Salazar. Let your kids be part of Bee Day on June 10. Just bring your kids to the nearest Jollibee outlet and register them as Jollibee Kids Club members, so they can join the biggest kiddie celebration in the country!

A treat from AC and Sogo

AUTOMATIC CENTRE AND SOGO HOME AND Office Center treat you to your favorite family restaurant, Max's, as a part of the "Free Trips and Treats" promo. You can get as much as 3 Max's Half Chicken Gift Certificates when you buy an appliance, audio-video product, gadget or furniture from any Automatic Centre and Sogo branches when you reach the minimum purchase required. You can also get a chance to win any of the 18 trips to exciting tourist destinations - Boracay and Cebu to be raffled off, courtesy of Cebu Beach Club, Patio Pacific Boracay, Negros Navigations, Bay Area Travel and Tours and Avian Travel and Tours. You can visit Automatic Centre Greenbelt 1 and Glorietta 4 in Makati; Market! Market! Mall in Taguig; Festival Supermall and Ayala Town Center in Alabang, Muntinlupa; SM Southmall in Las Piñas; Ortigas Home Depot in Pasig; Robinson's Place Pioneer and Edsa Central Mall in Mandaluyong; Tutuban Centermall in Manila; Shoppesville in Greenhills San Juan; Robinson's Galeria, Gateway Mall, Value Station Arcade and SM North Edsa in QC and in Ayala Center, Cebu. Sogo outlets are at the following areas: Glorietta 1 in Makati; Ali Mall in Cubao, QC; Robinson's Place Metro East in Pasig; Edsa Central Pavilion in Mandaluyong; Zabarte Town Center in Caloocan and in Tutuban Centermall 1, Manila. Promo is on a limited run.

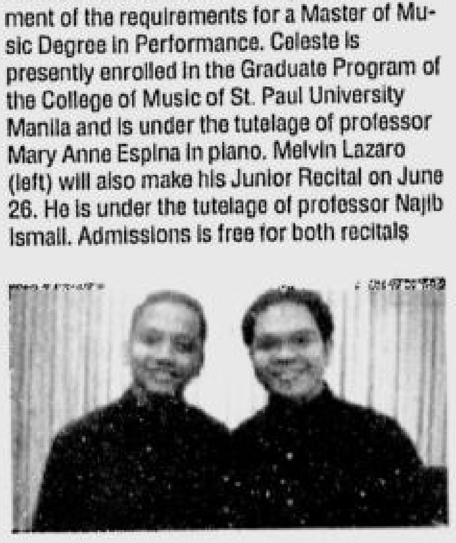
AGSB calls on alumni

THE ATENEO GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS (AGSB) is calling on all alumni to update their records in time for the school's 40th anniversary celebration this year. A series of events are planned including the publication of an alumni directory and an alumni homecoming on Nov. 24. Graduates of the Standard MBA Program, MBA for Middle Managers, the Ateneo-Regis Program, and the Master in Business and Health Program are requested to submit information about themselves (name, contact information, address, company or current affiliation and position, course and date graduated). The information may be submitted via e-mail to the Registrar at agsb40@aps.ateneo.edu. An alumni record update form is also available for download at www.gsb.ateneo.edu. This can be submitted online or by fax to 899-5548. Drop boxes for the registration forms shall, likewise, be placed in strategic locations at the 2nd floor of the APS building. For inquiries, call Rod Baldonado or Isabelita Suyom, Office of the Registrar, at 899-5548 or 899-7691 local 2214 to 2217. AGSB has campuses in the Ateneo Professional Schools, Rockwell Center, Makati; in HV dela Costa St, Salcedo Village, Makati; in Sta. Rosa, Laguna; in the Subic Base Freeport Zone, Olongapo City and in Cebu Holdings Center, Cardinal Rosales Avenue, Cebu Business Park.

Chamber Recital at St. Paul

Bits & Clips

JEDDI CRIS CELESTE (right), pianist, will be presented by St. Paul University Manila College of Music and the Performing Arts in a Chamber Recital on June 17, at 6 p.m. at the Fleur-de-lis Theater. This is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Music Degree in Performance. Celeste is presently enrolled in the Graduate Program of the College of Music of St. Paul University Manila and is under the tutelage of professor Mary Anne Espina in piano. Melvin Lazaro (left) will also make his Junior Recital on June 26. He is under the tutelage of professor Najib Ismail. Admissions is free for both recitals



BUSINESS

Gov't spent ₱47B for debt payment in April

4-month level already 45% of total allocation for '06

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT shelled out about P47 billion in April to pay maturing obligations, data from the Department of Finance showed.

Of the P46.871 billion spent on debt servicing in April, P24.680 billion represented interest payments on loans while the P22.191 billion represented payment for the principal obligations.

The amount spent on debt in April brought the government's total liabilities-related expenditure in the first four months of the year to P326.24 billion.

Of the four-month figure, P128.5 billion was spent for interest payments while P197.733 billion was used to pay maturing principal debts.

The January-to-April figure represented 45 percent of the P721.67 billion that the national government had allocated for debt servicing for this year.

The government has been earmarking about a third of its annual budget for interest payments, alone, given its total debt of P3.986 trillion as of end-February. This leaves very little budget for other key areas, such as infrastructure and basic services.

Recent data showed that if principal debt was included in the allocation, about 84 centavos of every P1 worth of tax and non-tax revenue that the government collects would have to be earmarked for debt servicing.

Interest payments have been increasing over the years, as the government continues to borrow from either the domestically or foreign sources to augment its yearly budget.

This year's programmed interest payment of P339.998 billion represents a 13-percent increase from the P299.807 billion recorded last year.

However, the Department of Budget and Management earlier said that starting 2007, the government's spending for interest payments would record its first decline since 1996 on account of declining budget deficit.

The last time the government registered a decrease in interest payments was in 1995, when the budget allocated for it dropped to P72.65 billion from P79.12 billion.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. earlier said the expected decline in interest payments next year took into account the declining interest rates imposed on the government's new borrowings.

A lower budget deficit means a government's credit risk is also declining. This translates to lower interest rates on this government's borrowings.

The government's budget deficit last year dropped to P146.8 billion from P180 billion in 2004. The level is expected to further go down to P125 billion this year.

For next year, the government targets to further slash the budget gap to P63 billion and to zero by 2008.

BSP approves Napocor's euro loan for rural electrification

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS has approved a 17.5-million euro loan sought by state-owned National Power Corp. for its rural electrification service project in Masbate.

BSP Gov. Amando Tetangco Jr. yesterday said the policy-making Monetary Board had approved Napocor's loan that would be extended by French lenders Natexis Banques Populaires and BNP Paribas.

Tetangco said the loan would be a mixed credit facility, with the larger portion carrying a concessional interest rate of 0.4 percent and a maturity of 25 years.

The remainder, he said, would carry a 4.12 -percent interest rate and maturity of 12.5 years.

Tetangco said the proceeds would be used to fund Napocor's Philippine Rural Electrification Service (PRES) project.

Last year, Napocor and a French consortium signed a contract for the electrification of 128 barangays in Masbate, the province with the most number of households without access to electricity.

The project forms part of the government's twin goal of attaining a 100-percent barangay electrification by 2008 and 90-percent household connection by 2017.

Existing laws mandate the Monetary Board to approve or disapprove all prospective borrowings of the public sector, whether from domestic or foreign sources. *Doris C. Dumlao*

Metrobank strengthening cash transfer business in Europe

By Doris C. Dumlao

METROPOLITAN BANK AND TRUST CO., THE country's biggest bank, is beefing up its remittance business in Europe to widen its reach to overseas Filipinos.

The bank yesterday had consolidated the operations of its remittance units in Europe in line with its bid to strengthen its position as a lead player in the cash transfer business. Covered by the consolidation were Metro Remittance Center S.A. in Spain and another office in Barcelona; Metro Remittance Center (Italia) S.p.A. in Italy and the offices in the key cities of Rome, Milan and Bologna; Metro Remittance UK in London and, MBTC Exchange Service GmbH in Vienna, Austria.

Carmelita R. Araneta, head of Metrobank's international offices and subsidiaries group, said the move had enabled the bank to offer prompt and enhanced services to Filipino and Chinese markets in the region.

"The consolidation contributed significantly to the increase in remittances from Europe," Araneta said.

The bank reported double-digit growth in volume and value of European remittances in 2005.

She said the bank was also expecting to increase business volume as a result of increased marketing efforts in the said areas. In Spain, for example, Metrobank is targeting the Chinese and Filipino communities.

To generate more remittance volume in Italy, Metrobank is maximizing its marketing mileage and bringing its remittance services closer to Filipinos through the relocation of Metro Remittance (Italia) S.p.A. to another area. Strategic alliances had also been formed with local Italian banks to make Metrobank services more accessible to remitters.

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ELEMENTS
of mind-body
exercise /C4

LIFESTYLE
Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**
sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) **or email us at** lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Overlooked 'wonder cures'

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

THERE ARE AS MANY things that will help humankind achieve good health as there are things that will make them sick.

In a world obsessed with things reputed to prolong life, delay aging and prevent illness, sometimes the best of aids is overlooked even if they are "right under our noses."

Here are some of them:

Water

This is an essential pillar of health. The human body requires constant hydration so drinking must be both a habit and a need.

For better health, drink 8-12 glasses of clean water daily. Dieters should drink one glass first thing in the morning on an empty stomach, 15-20 minutes before breakfast and every meal. This should temper your food urges and make you eat less.

Good hydration will contribute to less aches and pains and prevent dryness of the skin. It also enhances detoxification.

Garlic

Often called nature's antibiotic, garlic is an essential nutrient. Natural medicine experts believe it boosts the immune system, clears the blood and improves circulation.

Some have formed the habit of taking it fresh after a meal and at the onset of headaches. However, it may be hard for some to digest it in its raw state, as it can cause gas.

Best to listen to your body. Garlic capsules are now available at every health food chain.

Parsley

Oh yes! It's not only for decorative purposes. Parsley is a natural deodorizer.

So if you have eaten too much odorous food, munch on a sprig of parsley. No need to swallow but best if you do. When taken as tea, steep fresh sprigs in a pot of boiling water for five minutes. The tea is ready when water becomes greenish. This is a digestive. It also deodorizes the body naturally resulting in a fresh scent. That's guaranteed.

Ginger

Add a cup of freshly grated ginger (about 1 tbsp) to a pot of hot water. The drink will warm the tummy, aid digestion, remove gases and raise the thermogenic (heat) level of the body (needed for fat burning). This is a dieter's choice.

Rice water (am)

In the old days, grandmothers used to give their grandchildren rice water (taken from rice that is being cooked), to ease a gassy tummy and colic. Did they know something we didn't know, until today?

Immortalizing ancient practice into a science for better health, Alfa PSP was created by Enzacta, a United States-based company. Extracts from grains of rice, ingredients called polysaccharide and polypeptide, were bound together to design a food for the cell. The resulting product feeds the mitochondria (power generator) of the cell resulting in greater energy.

Ideally, the more energy a mitochondria has, the stronger the cells are. In turn, the cells fix the health condition of the body.

Under clinical studies now are cases involving several health challenges—cancer, diabetes, hypertension, Alzheimer, migraines, body pains.

Testimonials come from many. Mely Revilla, 47, suffered from hypertension. Within weeks of taking PSP, her kidney problems were reduced by 70 percent. Lawyer Sambitore Lucman, a stroke patient, now has a better quality of life. Hans Palacios, a businessman, suffered from chronic body pain. He now lives without the aches that plagued him. (Refer to the website enzacta.com)

Some women who have been on the program for a month noticed a mild facelift effect, with fewer wrinkles on the face.

Who would suspect that grandma already discovered long ago the health and beauty benefits of rice? PSP, now in the market, is expected to help improve people's lives.

There are reports PSP may help address neurological problems especially in children, such as ADD (attention deficit disorder) and Tourette's Syndrome.

For information, call 6371564.

Beauty regimen

Spritz up your face with water at least twice a day. Just sprinkle a few drops on your face and pat your cheeks. This will refresh you instantly.

Affirmation for the week

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3-year	11.00%	P10,322
5-year	11.25%	P10,493
10-year	**11.50%**	**P10,665**

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What are the most common kidney diseases and its causes?

Urinary tract infection (UTI) and kidney stones (nephrolithiasis) are the top 2 common kidney diseases encountered in clinical practice. Patients with UTI would usually present themselves having to urinate frequently throughout the day even without increased fluid intake. They may also feel pain during urination and is often accompanied by tenderness over the lower back and/or tenderness in the lower abdomen where the bladder is anatomically located. In order to prevent this, you have to urinate once you feel the urge to do so. Kidney stones (nephrolithiasis) is the second most common kidney disease. Patients usually feel colicky pain (often described as having "gas") over the lower back. The pain usually waxes and wane especially when the stone is travelling along the urinary tract. Patients usually have a strong family history of kidney stone formers or they may have previous history of stone passage or removal. The best screening test to confirm if you have kidney stones is to undergo an ultrasound. Prevention is the key to minimize your chances of having kidney stones. Have yourself tested for any possibility of increased serum uric acid, drink lots of water (2-3 liters/day) and avoid salty foods.

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our medical service provider from Metro Manila, Dr. Josierina Y. Sarmiento. She specializes in IM-Nephrology. Dra. Sarmiento finished her medicine proper at FEU-NRMF in 1995. She later took her specialization training for Internal Medicine at Makati Medical Center and completed her sub-specialty course for Nephrology in the same institution. She is a diplomate and fellow of the Philippine College of Physicians and diplomate of the Philippine Society of Nephrology. MEDICard members may visit her for consultation services at Makati Medical Center, Mondays thru Saturdays from 9am-12noon and at Asian Hospital & Medical Center, Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays & Saturdays from 1pm to 5pm.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

Nicky

MEDICard PHILIPPINES, INC. 5th floor Sagittarius Building H.V. dela Costa Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City 1227 **Trunkline:** [illegible] **Fax No.:** 894-5729 / 810-3465 **Text:** Key in MEDICARD (space) send to 2344 (Globe & Touch Mobile) or 4627 (Smart & Talk 'N Text) **E-mail:** inquiry@medicardphils.com **Website:** www.medicardphils.com

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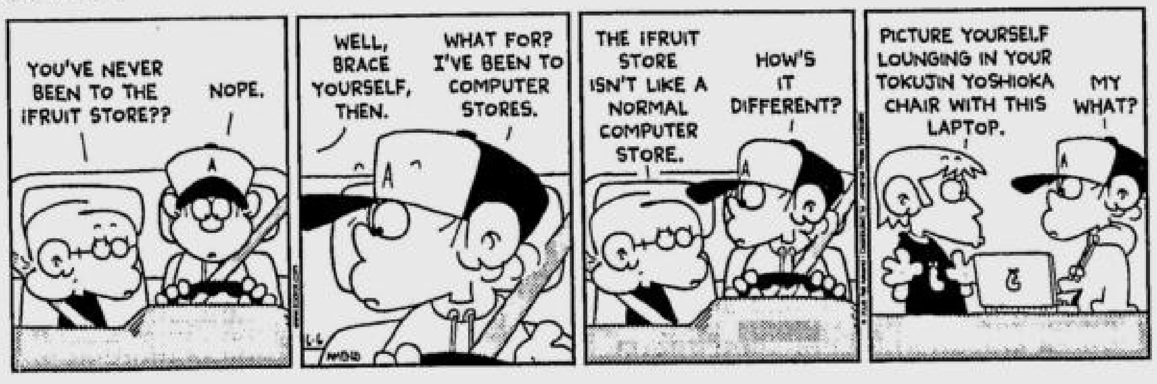
PROMO PERIOD: MAY 25 - JUNE 10, 2006 PER DTI-NCR PERMIT NO. 1258 SERIES OF 2006

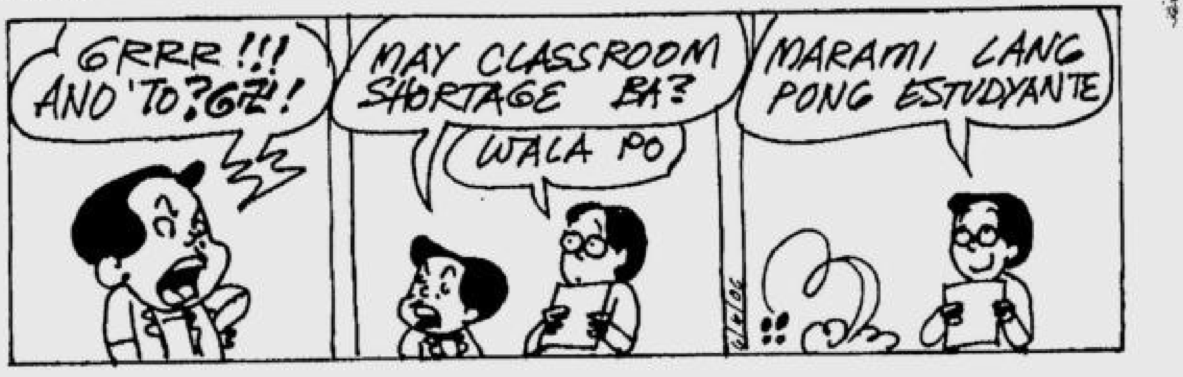
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TO THE iFRUIT STORE??
NOPE.
WELL, BRACE YOURSELF, THEN.
WHAT FOR? I'VE BEEN TO COMPUTER STORES.
THE iFRUIT STORE ISN'T LIKE A NORMAL COMPUTER STORE.
HOW'S IT DIFFERENT?
PICTURE YOURSELF LOUNGING IN YOUR TOKUJIN YOSHIOKA CHAIR WITH THIS LAPTOP.
MY WHAT?

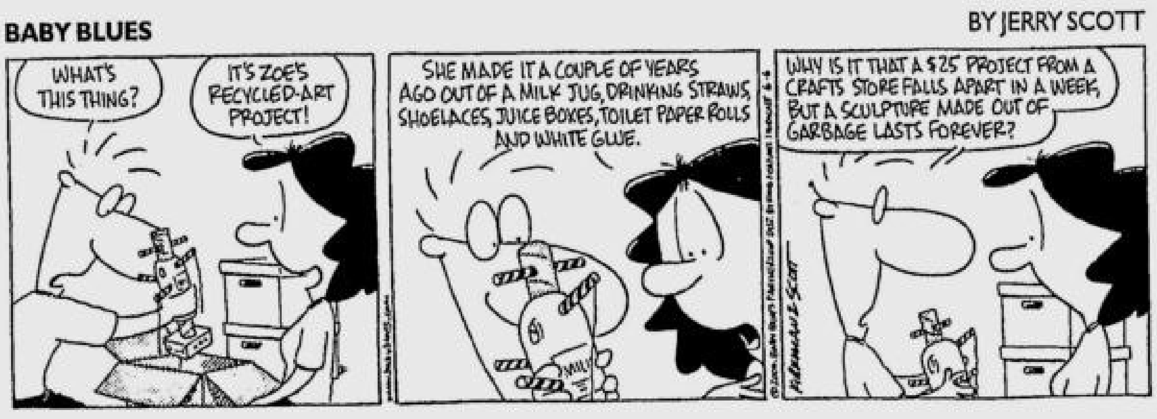
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


GRRR!!! ANO 'TO?&%!
MAY CLASSROOM SHORTAGE BA?
WALA PO
MARAMI LANG PONG ESTUDYANTE

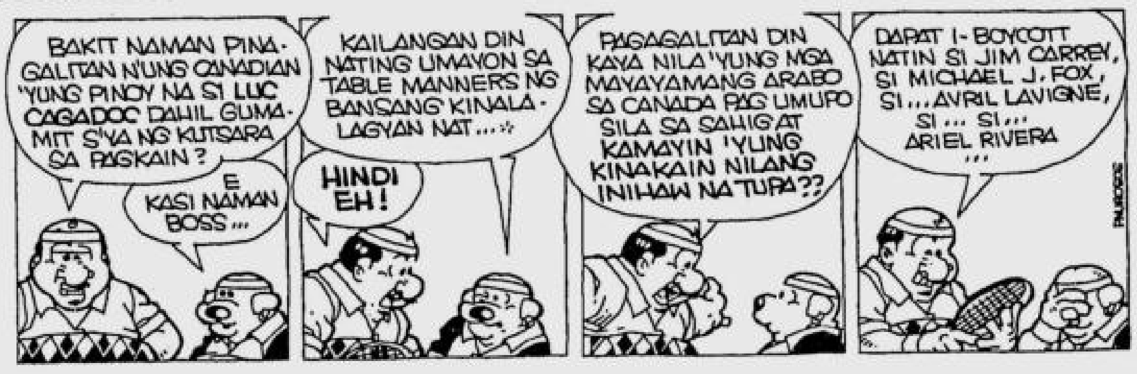
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT'S THIS THING?
IT'S ZOE'S RECYCLED-ART PROJECT!
SHE MADE IT A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO OUT OF A MILK JUG, DRINKING STRAWS, SHOELACES, JUICE BOXES, TOILET PAPER ROLLS AND WHITE GLUE.
WHY IS IT THAT A $25 PROJECT FROM A CRAFTS STORE FALLS APART IN A WEEK, BUT A SCULPTURE MADE OUT OF GARBAGE LASTS FOREVER?
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

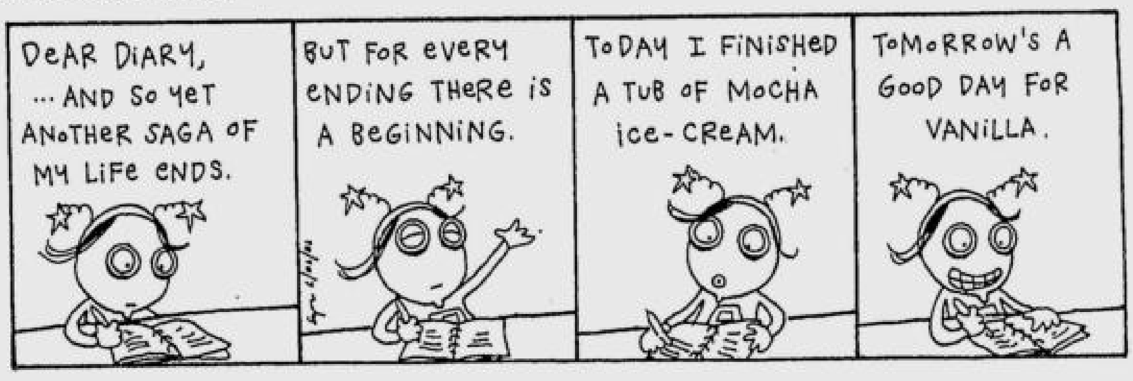
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


BAKIT NAMAN PINAGALITAN N'UNG CANADIAN 'YUNG PINOY NA SI LUC CAGADOC DAHIL GUMAMIT S'YA NG KUTSARA SA PAGKAIN?
E KASI NAMAN BOSS...
KAILANGAN DIN NATING UMAYON SA TABLE MANNERS NG BANSANG KINALALAGYAN NAT...
HINDI EH!
PAGAGALITAN DIN KAYA NILA 'YUNG MGA MAYAYAMANG ARABO SA CANADA PAG UMUPO SILA SA SAHIG AT KAMAYIN 'YUNG KINAKAIN NILANG INIHAW NA TUPA??
DAPAT I-BOYCOTT NATIN SI JIM CARREY, SI MICHAEL J. FOX, SI... AVRIL LAVIGNE, SI... SI... ARIEL RIVERA
...

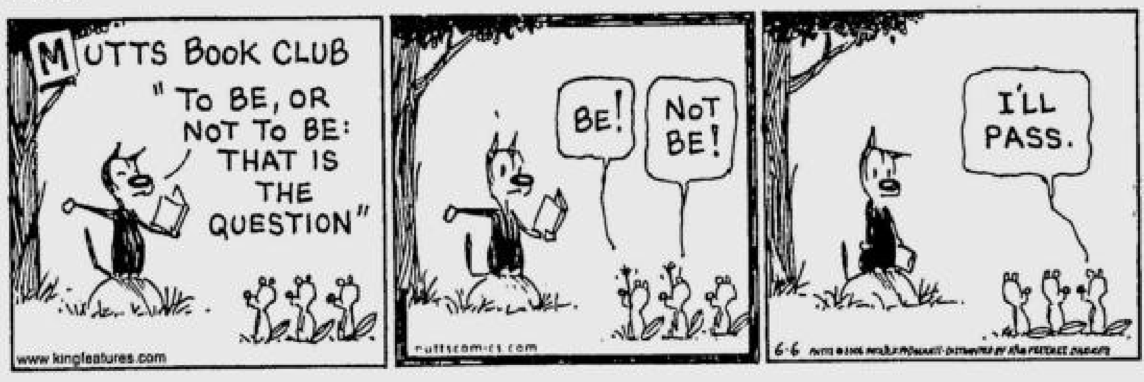
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


DEAR DIARY, ...AND SO YET ANOTHER SAGA OF MY LIFE ENDS.
BUT FOR EVERY ENDING THERE IS A BEGINNING.
TODAY I FINISHED A TUB OF MOCHA ICE-CREAM.
TOMORROW'S A GOOD DAY FOR VANILLA.

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MUTTS Book CLUB
"To BE, OR NOT To BE: THAT IS THE QUESTION"
BE!
NOT BE!
I'LL PASS.
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
6-6

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

			4	1	7			
3		2				5		7
	7						6	
7			6		2			3
1				5				9
2			1		9			6
	2						9	
9		3				1		4
			8	9	5			

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Difficulty Level ★★ 6/06

How to play Su Doku

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

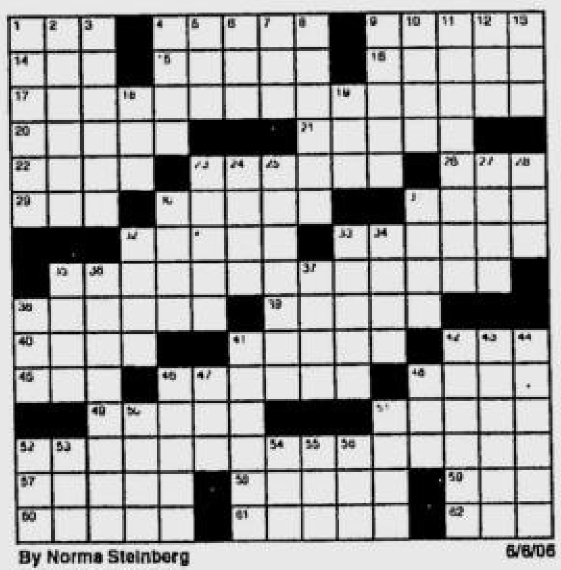
Answer to previous puzzle

9	5	6	3	1	2	8	7	4
2	4	7	8	6	9	5	3	1
1	3	8	7	4	5	2	6	9
7	6	4	2	3	1	9	8	5
8	9	2	6	5	7	1	4	3
5	1	3	9	8	4	6	2	7
6	8	5	4	9	3	7	1	2
4	2	9	1	7	6	3	5	8
3	7	1	5	2	8	4	9	6

Difficulty Level ★

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Male turkey
4 Use a razor
9 Postage
14 __ pro nobis
15 Spiral form
16 Hot chocolate
17 Mutually beneficial event
20 Encore!
21 Concluded
22 Wedding token
23 Backbones
26 Bar bill
29 Forensics letters
30 Modernist poet Ezra
31 Andean country
32 Word with sienna or umber
33 Waist cincher
35 Croupier's line
38 Salespeople
39 Forest units
40 Cooking vessels
41 Smacking of the sea
42 Short-order order
45 Classified __
46 Implicit warning
48 Length x width
49 Mothered overly
51 Shaq's surname
52 Display in the best light
57 Comic Mandel
58 Back-comb
59 Baltimore paper
60 Deed holder
61 City near Limerick
62 Asian holiday



By Norma Steinberg
San Francisco, CA
6/6/06

DOWN
1 In the direction of
2 Genesis
3 Tijuana tomorrow
4 Part of the leg
5 Female quail
6 Gore and Franken
7 Number of Roman hills
8 Put forth
9 Oodles
10 Open-topped purse
11 Rigorous appraisal
12 Dairy farm sound
13 Forest deity
18 Hair purchase
19 One for Pierre
23 Blisters and bruises
24 Weak
25 All together
27 God of war
28 Except
30 Hockey projectile
31 White House res.
32 Keeps out
33 Mediterranean island
34 Mind
35 Trudge
36 Disappoints
37 Web sites
38 Tax preparer
41 Solemn
42 Confront boldly
43 Sports conference
44 Knack
46 Aquatic mammal
47 Classic Olds
48 Opp. of syn.
50 Boo-boo
51 Small bills
52 HBO rival
53 By what means
54 Cozy room
55 Pianist Cliburn
56 Pilot's gauge: abbr.

Monday's Puzzle Solved

B	A	S	I	L		W	A	R	M		D	E	A	F
A	E	T	N	A		A	S	I	A		R	E	D	O
G	R	A	S	P		R	O	D	T	A	Y	L	O	R
S	O	F	T		K	I	N	E	T	I	C			
		F	A	C	I	L	E			R	E	S	T	S
E	C	O	N	O	M	Y		S	H	E	L	T	O	N
M	U	F	T	I			B	A	A		L	I	F	O
I	L	L		H	I	L	L	E	L	S		C	F	O
G	L	I	B		Y	E	S			A	S	K	E	D
R	E	F	A	C	E	D		C	A	R	A	F	E	S
E	N	E	R	O			S	A	L	A	M	I		
			R	O	S	A	L	I	E		U	G	L	I
C	A	N	E	S	U	G	A	R		D	R	U	I	D
A	W	O	L		N	U	N	N		E	A	R	L	E
R	E	D	S		G	E	T	S		E	I	E	I	O

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6/5/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are definitely artistic. You have a vivid imagination. You have a wide range of expression. Family is very important to you; however, some relatives and friends will consider you to be a bit eccentric. You're just not afraid to test your ideas! This year, friendships and partnerships will be extremely important to you. They will be your major focus.
Birthdate of: Max Casella, actor; Sandra Bernhard, comedian; Bjorn Borg, tennis player.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're tempted to go overboard when spending money today. You might come across a bargain you can't resist. (Sometimes you can't afford to take advantage of an incredible savings!)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Some kind of excessive indulgence will tempt you today. It could be related to eating, drinking or going overboard with everything! (A minute on the lips is a lifetime on the hips.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Don't make promises at work that you can't keep. Give yourself a reasonable deadline for everything. Your attempt to please somebody today could get you into hot water tomorrow.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): It's good to be generous to friends, but there is such a thing as idiot compassion. True generosity is giving what is needed. Don't try to impress anybody with extravagance.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Because you want to make a good impression on important people today (your boss, a VIP or a parent), you might promise someone the Moon. Don't do it. If you have any doubts, say nothing.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You might have to curb your plans about travel or something having to do with publishing and education. There's a tendency to go overboard today.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Don't give away the farm! If you have earned your own rightful share of something, take it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Good feelings between you and partners or close friends could make you go overboard with generosity or promises about the future. There's no need to do this. (Caution.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Today Venus opposes your ruler, Jupiter. This encourages a tendency to be excessive and overindulgent. Don't make promises to coworkers that you can't keep. Don't try to please everybody.

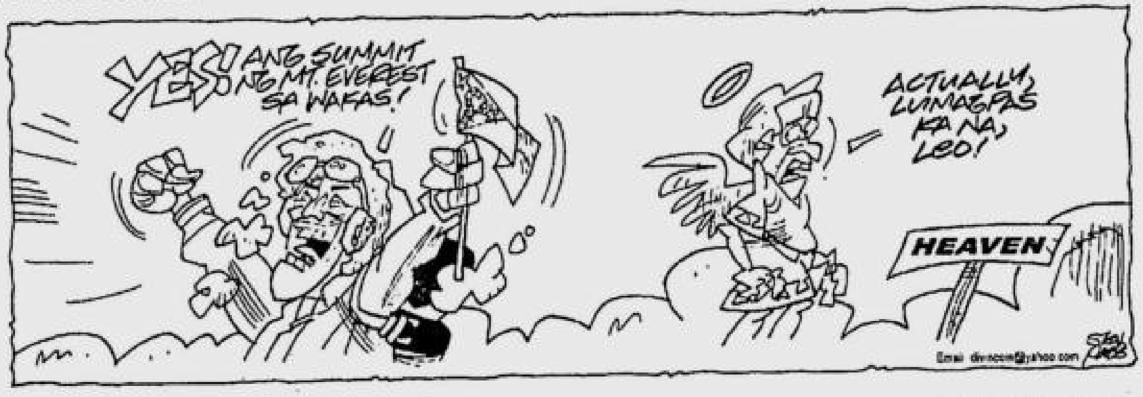
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You could go overboard partying today! You might also be overzealous in making promises to children. Try to keep things on an even keel. Practice moderation.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Don't spend too much money on family members or something special for your home today. It's OK to have a treat, but you don't want to bankrupt yourself.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your enthusiasm about something could cause you to get carried away. You might promise too much to siblings and friends. Be careful about what you can actually deliver.

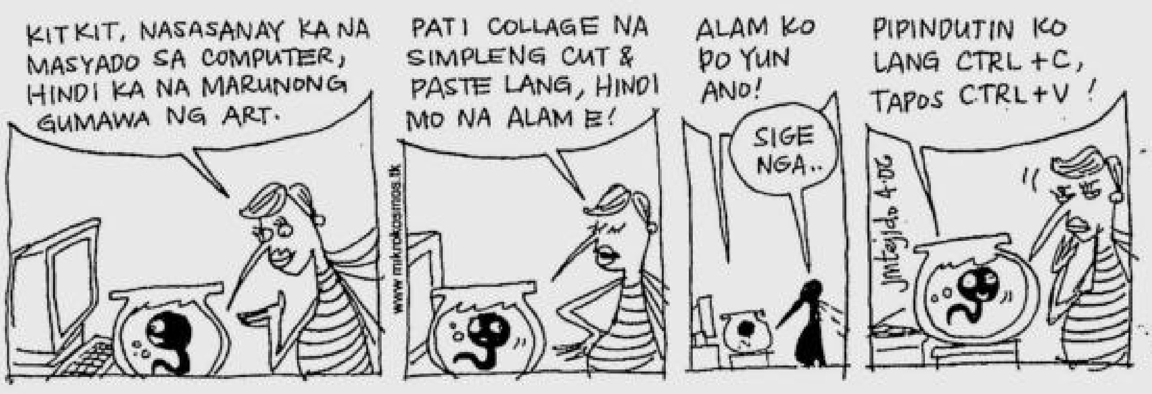
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


YES! ANG SUMMIT NG MT. EVEREST SA WAKAS!
ACTUALLY, LUMAGPAS KA NA, LEO!
HEAVEN
Email: divncom@yahoo.com

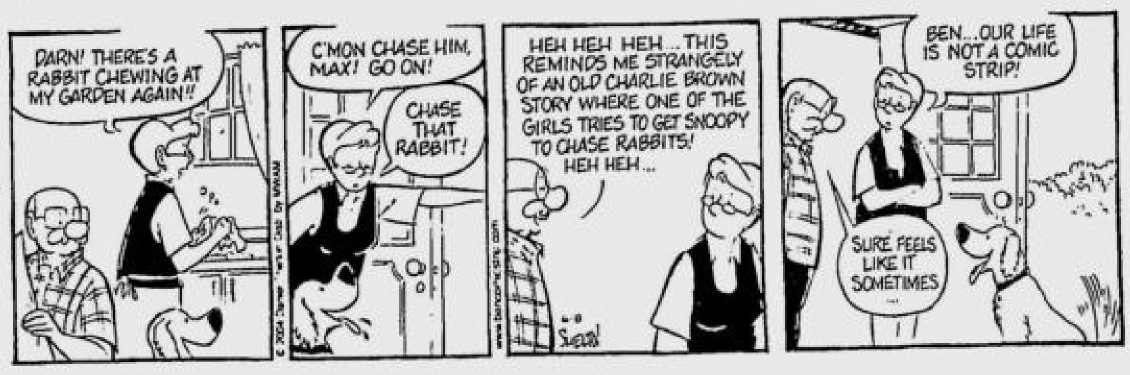
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


KITKIT, NASASANAY KA NA MASYADO SA COMPUTER, HINDI KA NA MARUNONG GUMAWA NG ART.
PATI COLLAGE NA SIMPLENG CUT & PASTE LANG, HINDI MO NA ALAM E!
ALAM KO PO YUN ANO!
SIGE NGA..
PIPINDUTIN KO LANG CTRL+C, TAPOS CTRL+V!
www.mikrokosmos.tk
jmtejido 4-06

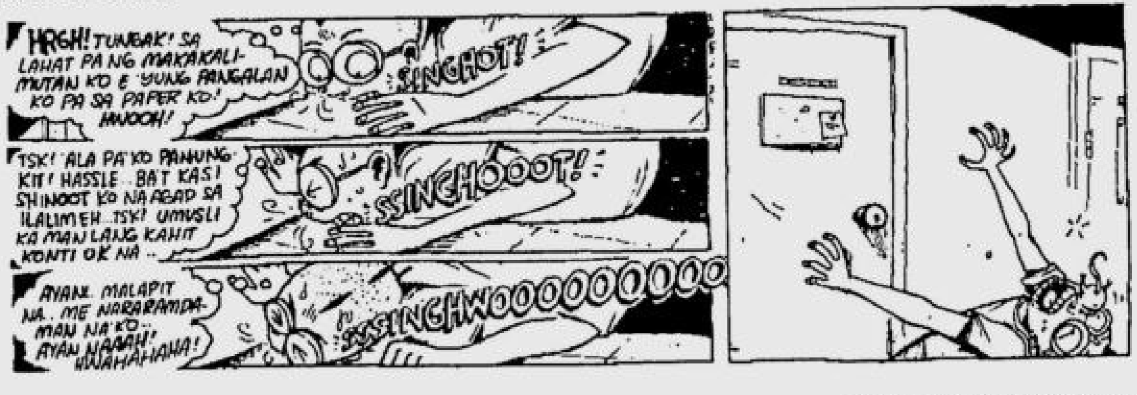
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


DARN! THERE'S A RABBIT CHEWING AT MY GARDEN AGAIN!!
C'MON CHASE HIM, MAX! GO ON!
CHASE THAT RABBIT!
HEH HEH HEH... THIS REMINDS ME STRANGELY OF AN OLD CHARLIE BROWN STORY WHERE ONE OF THE GIRLS TRIES TO GET SNOOPY TO CHASE RABBITS! HEH HEH...
BEN... OUR LIFE IS NOT A COMIC STRIP!
SURE FEELS LIKE IT SOMETIMES...

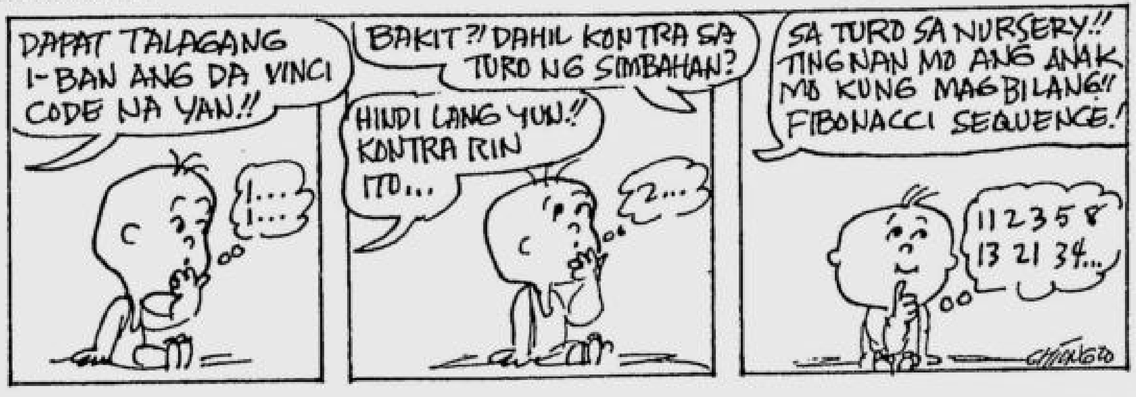
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HRGH! TUNGAK! SA LAHAT PA NG MAKAKALIMUTAN KO E 'YUNG PANGALAN KO PA SA PAPER KO! HNOOH!
SINGHOT!
TSK! ALA PA 'KO PANUNGKIT! HASSLE.. BAT KASI SHINOOT KO NA AGAD SA ILALIM EH.. TSK! UMUSLI KA MAN LANG KAHIT KONTI OK NA..
SSINGHOOOT!
AYAN.. MALAPIT NA.. ME NARARAMDAMAN NA 'KO.. AYAN NAAAH! WAHAHAHAHA!
SSSINGHWOOOOOOOOOO

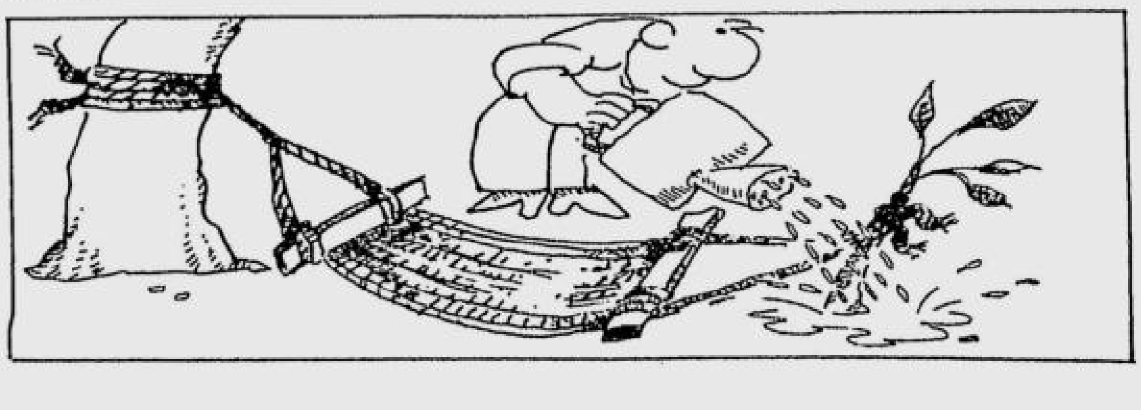
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DAPAT TALAGANG I-BAN ANG DA VINCI CODE NA YAN!!
1... 1...
BAKIT?! DAHIL KONTRA SA TURO NG SIMBAHAN?
HINDI LANG YUN!! KONTRA RIN ITO...
2...
SA TURO SA NURSERY!! TINGNAN MO ANG ANAK MO KUNG MAGBILANG!! FIBONACCI SEQUENCE!
1 1 2 3 5 8 13 21 34...
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



NESTEA Team 10 members Zigmund Nicolas, Melanie Umali, Michelle Bañez, Mary Tan, Rachell Siapco, Lin Shan, Melchor Faustino and Raphael Bediones

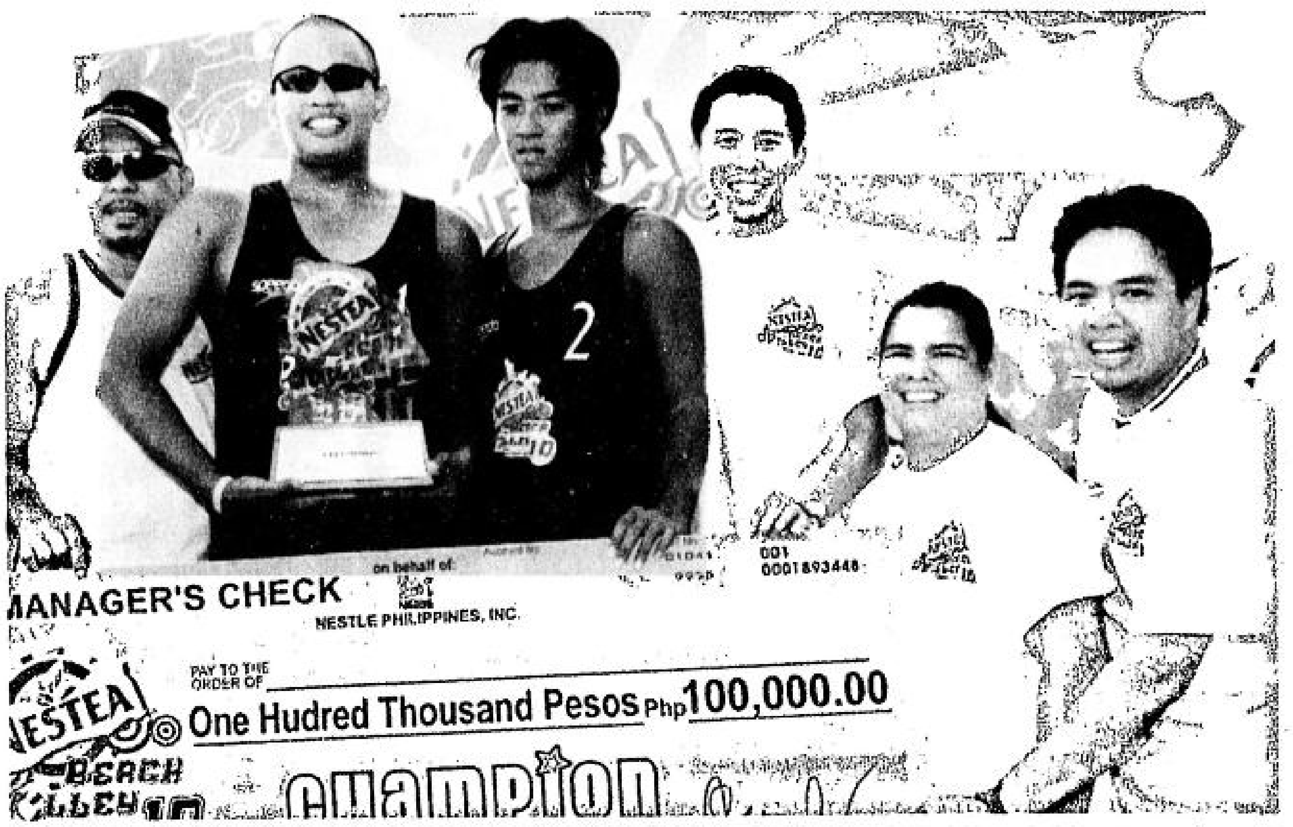
NESTLÉ SVP and business executive manager Eugene David, with wife Sheila and son Kyle

ALL IN THE FAMILLE. Nestlé AVP and Nestea consumer marketing manager, the simpatica Tina Samaco, with husband, businessman Joel S., daughter Mattie and son Javier

NESTLÉ AVP Raymond Villaflor with Maui Taylor

COLLEGE of St. Benilde's Janilyn Sarabia and Faith Ann de Guzman

BEACH volley annotators Jana Abrera del Prado and Peaches Aberin



MALAY Mayor Ceciron Cawaling; Adamson University champions Mike Alinsunurin and Sherwin Meneses; and Nestlé's SVP Eugene David, AVP Tina Samaco, and assistant brand activation manager Gabby Posadas

VICTORY show director Jay Altarejos, Raine Romero and Tom Alvarado

JUN Suarez

ROWENA Cuyco

REP. Ding Tanjuatco and Saudi Arabian Ambassador Mohammed Ameen Wali

ARCHITECT Luigi Borromeo

ROMAN Romulo, Carla Sibal, Rainier Eubra, Anna Regalado and Philip Abadicio; (seated) Sarah Samonte and Penny Sibal-Balbin

Hot guests for a cool event

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

HOT BORACAY ONCE AGAIN hosted a series of hot dance-dance-till-you-drop fun parties, as the Nestea Beach Volley 2006 ended, *palanggas*.

The highly anticipated happening drew a plethora of the country's hottest personalities, who all had a great time partying with Nestea in the tropical island paradise.

Welcoming the stars to the summer hotspot was popular Malay Mayor **Ceciron Cawaling**, who was joined by key Nestlé executives. Leading the pack was Nestlé SVP and senior business executive manager **Eugene David**; Nestlé AVP and head of consumer promotions and events **Raymond Villaflor**; Nestlé AVP and Nestea consumer marketing manager, adorable **Tina Samaco**; and Nestea assistant brand activation manager **Gabby Posadas**.

Plus, Philippine Volleyball Federation president **Roger Banzuela** and Publicis Manila director **Ronald Barreiro**.

The most exciting part was the Nestea Beach Volley Celebrity Matches. Showing surprisingly exceptional skills were movie/TV personality **Maui Taylor**; my *palangga*, model **Nicolette Bell**; fun columnist **JR Isaac** and Publicis Manila art director **Mondo Armilleda**. They outplayed TV personalities **Brad Turvey** and **Jennifer Lee**, models **Iago Raterta** and **Raine Romero**, to win the Nestea Beach Volley Celebrity Match Championship, *palanggas*.

Cheering for their favorite teams were hot-hot eye-catchers, like Miss Denmark **Thea Froekjaer**; TV personalities **Jaja Bolivar** and **Nina Dolino**, as well as members of the Professional Models Association of the Phils. (PMAP) **Bianca Valerio, Mikee Carreon** and **Gary Dulatas**; absolutely gorgeous **Bubbles Paraiso**; MTV VJ **Marc Abaya**; models **Raya Mananquil, Corey Wills** and **Valerie de los Santos**, plus so many others like them, dahlings, too beautiful to mention.

Adding spice was a series of fun bashes that started in Manille and moved to Boracay's major hotspots like Villa de Oro, Summer Place and Café del Mar, headlined by the Pik Pak Boom Reggae Band, Urbandub and club maestro **Manolet Dario**, natch!

But the ultimate party was the NBV Set Point victory bash at the D'Mall D'Boracay beach front hosted by hot TV personalities, drop-dead handsome Brad Turvey and gorgeous **Tisha Silang**. The place rocked to the awesome performance of Bamboo.

As in previous years, cool Nestea held a hot resort fashion show featuring cool, comfy, stylish creations and dazzling accessories from Nautilus by **PJ Arañador**, whose shop is at D'Mall D'Boracay; and sexy and trendy swimsuits from Speedo.

Taking to the catwalk were PMAP top models, and NBV Team 10 members.

Seventy-two teams from colleges and universities nationwide made it to the semis and finals of the Nestea Beach Volley 2006 competition. They competed for over half a million pesos in prizes.

Taking the men's and women's crowns, respectively, *palanggas* were **Mike Alinsunurin** and **Sherwin Meneses** of Adamson University, and **Faith Ann de Guzman** and **Janilyn Sarabia** of College of St. Benilde.

Scent of Italy

The minute we breezed in, we felt we were in a pizzeria in front of the piazza of the *domo* (cathedral) in Florence, Italy, *palanggas*, with the aroma of fresh stone oven-baked herbs, cheese and tomato sauce, wafting from the cool, hip Italian restaurant Roma Mia Pizza and Grill at the third level of The Podium.

Après a couple of glasses of wine, waiters went around serving an endless array of genuine homemade Italian pasta, pizza, Italian-style grilled meat and seafood dishes, plus other fine delicacies. The food was excellently prepared by young and highly trained Filipino chefs for the resto's grand opening night attended by a pack of fabulous socialites and heavyweight politicians, dahlings.

"It's a cool (place) for diners who (value) good food, good service and spectacular ambiance. These are the fine qualities that make Roma Mia a top dining destination in the Ortigas business center," said the proud owners, beautiful couple **Zenon Regalado** and attractive **Anna Regalado**, *palanggas*.

Roma Mia carries excellent Italian red and white wines from the Le Cellier group, no less. It didn't take long before Union Bank's **Emmanuel Valdes** and his wife **Dhia**; RPA & Communicate's **Philip Abadicio** and **Miwi da Costa**; young hip businessmen **George Kintanar** and **Harvard Uy**; socialites **Lilibeth Picache, Emy Gonzales, Hermie Aquino, Ces Maurico** and architect **Manny Minana**; and wine connoisseur **Sylvester Samonte** were sharing with us a bottle of superb wine.

The fab ambiance is attributed to the restaurant's huge, awesome arch ceiling bearing fantastic life-size photo collage of Italy's famous sights.

Check out this cool, casual Italian dining place. It is so easy on the wallet, *palanggas*.

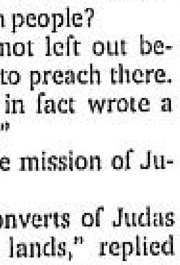
Roma Mia Pizza, Pasta and Grill is at 319 The Podium, 18 ADB Ave., Mandaluyong.

SUPER HOSTS Zenon and Anna Regalado, with our pal, Rep. Tonyboy Floirendo; TV star Amy Perez and popular lawyer Roman Romulo

Secrets Jesus reveals to Judas

Part III

INNER AWARENESS



Jaime T. Licauco

"SO WHY DID THE BIBLE depict Judas as a traitor?" asked Jun Aquiatan.

"Only the four gospels that are in the present Bible depicted Judas as a traitor. However, there are other writings aside from the four gospels that narrated (differently) and these are the documents that would be found later."

"But again, why depict Judas as a traitor, if he was not?" insisted Aquiatan.

"You must understand," explained Gabbey, "the selection of the gospels was based on similarity to avoid conflicts. That is why the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the synoptic gospels or gospels with the same point of view. Since the gospel of John also portrayed Judas as a traitor, then it was also selected.

"However, there are many written gospels that are not in the present Bible. You see, the Church did not have a system or criteria in the selection of books to be included in the present Bible.

"The personal views of those charged with the task of putting up the Bible prevailed. Additionally, the present Bible underwent several changes. Most of those changes were made to suit the intentions of those in charge at that time."

Meeting

After the resurrection of Jesus, according to Gabbey, he met Judas personally and gave him the task of preaching the gospel in Egypt.

Why Egypt? "Because both Judas and Jesus were from Egypt during a previous incarnation when they were brothers," explained Gabbey. "You see, Egypt was a very important land even during the time of the Old Testament; the chosen people came from Egypt. When Jesus was sought by Herod, Joseph, with Mary and Jesus, went into hiding in Egypt.

"Did you not wonder why, in the Bible, no apostle went to Egypt to preach the gospel? Why should Egypt be left out in preaching the gospel when it played a very important role in the life of Jesus and even with the chosen people?

"Actually, Egypt was not left out because Judas was tasked to preach there. One of Judas' disciples in fact wrote a gospel for the Egyptians."

What happened to the mission of Judas in Egypt?

"The disciples and converts of Judas grew and reached far lands," replied Gabbey. "However, the Christian practices of Judas' disciples and converts differed from those of the other apostles."

What was the difference?

"I told you Jesus met Judas after the resurrection. Jesus emphasized the secrets of the kingdom and these secrets were the basis of Judas' Christian practices."

What were the secrets?

Key

"Central among the secrets was the activation and use of the Seven Power Stations to gain spiritual enlightenment. I told you several times before the key to the kingdom of God was through the Seven Power Stations. Read Luke chapter 17 verse 21 and it says the kingdom of God is within you. The Seven Power Stations are all within you. All you have to do is to activate them, as Judas preached."

"I read somewhere the Gnostics practiced self-illumination to gain knowledge and understanding," said Aquiatan. "Was Judas a Gnostic?"

"The word Gnostic," replied Gabbey, "was coined later on. Judas himself did not even know the word Gnostic. What he knew was that the practice he taught his disciples was from Christ himself and therefore an original Christian practice."

After that statement, Gabbey abruptly ended his message by saying, "I believe I have given you enough information. Our meeting ends now."

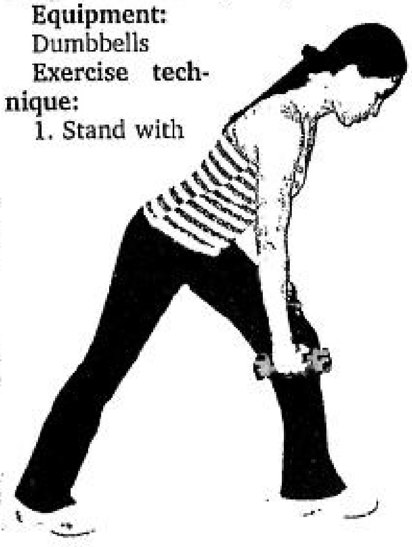
No matter how much we may doubt Gabbey's identity, one thing is clear. The information he gave to Aquiatan about the life of Judas Iscariot was consistent with the newly translated Gospel of Judas and explained a great deal more than what could be found in the Judas gospel itself.

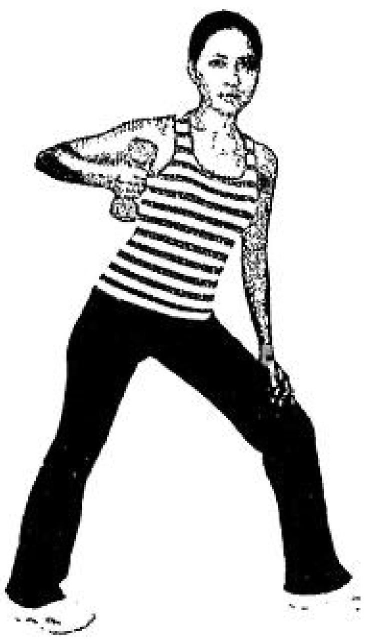
It was also consistent with the other teachings of Jesus as contained in the Nag Hammadi papyrus texts, especially the Gospels of Thomas, Philip and Mary Magdalene.

We may not be able to prove what Gabbey has revealed, but they certainly make sense.

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Standing one-arm row with twist





STRENGTHENS THE BACK OF THE shoulders, sides of the back and the biceps while rotating the spine

Equipment:

Dumbbells

Exercise technique:

1. Stand with your left leg in front and the right leg behind.

2. Hold the dumbbell in your right hand. Lean forward from the hip and support your upper body with your left hand on your left thigh.

3. Contract shoulder blade and pull the dumbbell backward while simultaneously rotating the spine.

4. Slowly return to starting position.

5. Do all repetitions on one side, then the other.

Performance tips:

1. Initiate the movement by rotating at the waist.

2. Move with control to avoid jerking the spine.

3. Keep your elbow close to your torso.

Repetitions:

Do 12-15 repetitions per side.

The basics of mind-body exercise

Part One

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

YOGA, TAI CHI, AND QI GONG ARE classical examples of exercise that strengthens mind-body connection. Pilates, Nia (Swahili for "with purpose") and Feldenkrais are modern formats.

But what exactly is mind-body exercise and what makes it different from other forms of exercise?

"Any physical exercise executed with a profound, inwardly directed awareness or focus" is the definition given by Idea's mind-body fitness committee. Idea is one of the largest and most prestigious international associations of fitness professionals.

Ralph La Forge, former chair and exercise physiologist, has identified more than 1,700 kinds of mind-body exercise formats including 700-plus kinds of yoga. He says 100 new techniques are being developed every year inspired by the "father" and "mother" of all exercise—yoga and Qi Gong.

According to Idea, a mind-body exercise has one or two of the following components:

Mindfulness

The mind directs the movement of the body. There is a mental focus on how the body is moving.

Mind-body fitness consultant Michele Hebert says, "When the mind is truly focused, it exists in the present moment, clear and free of distracting thoughts unrelated to events in the here and now."

The mind becomes aware of the body's posture and the physical activity that is taking place. Joseph Pilates has said where the mind goes, the body follows.

While most mind-body exercise techniques use an inward focus, a few have an external focus. Still, the mind is used to harness the power of the body.

Breath

The breath is considered the "bridge" or the link between the mind and the body, according to Hebert. "The way we breathe is intimately connected with both mind and body."

As an example, slow, deep breathing decreases nervousness and actually alters neurochemical substances in the brain.

Each mind-body form of exercise has its own breathing patterns that match the physical movements. The breath is used to keep you focused and "centered."

Alignment

Emphasis is placed on correct spinal alignment and developing strength and flexibility in all the trunk muscles. This is to achieve most effectively the desired results from the exercise and, most importantly, for physical safety. Obviously, mental concentration is needed to keep the body in perfect posture.

Energy

Perceiving the movement and flow of one's energy (also called "*chi*" or "*prana*") is an essential element in mind-body exercise. While *chi* or *prana* sounds very exotic, this is actually focusing inward and "listening" to the inner rhythms of your body.

Benefits

La Forge reports that a "growing body of scientific evidence has supported mindful exercise as a significant means of favorably altering various aspects of health, specifically cardiovascular risk factors and mood state."

He says, "Hypertension, insulin resistance, anxiety, blood lipid disorders, pain, coronary disease and poor self-esteem all favorably respond to one or more mind-body exercise strategies."

Other benefits include increased balance, flexibility, coordination, mental awareness and focus.

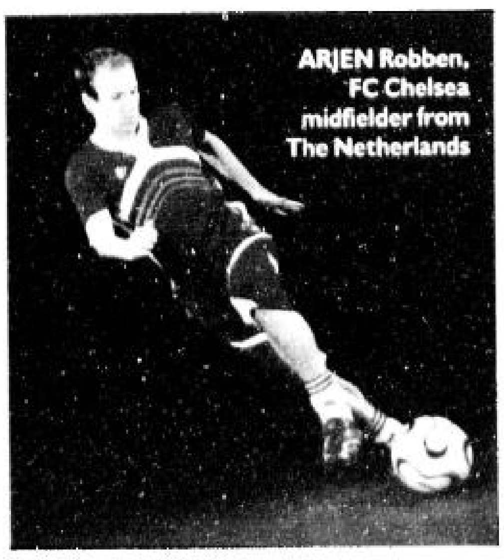
Note: Sen. Pia Cayetano will lead the 5th Bike for Hope Advocacy Ride for Health and the Environment on June 17, in Cagayan de Oro City. Call 0927-4045187 or at 0920-8028912. Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

Best and brightest in 'Impossible Team'

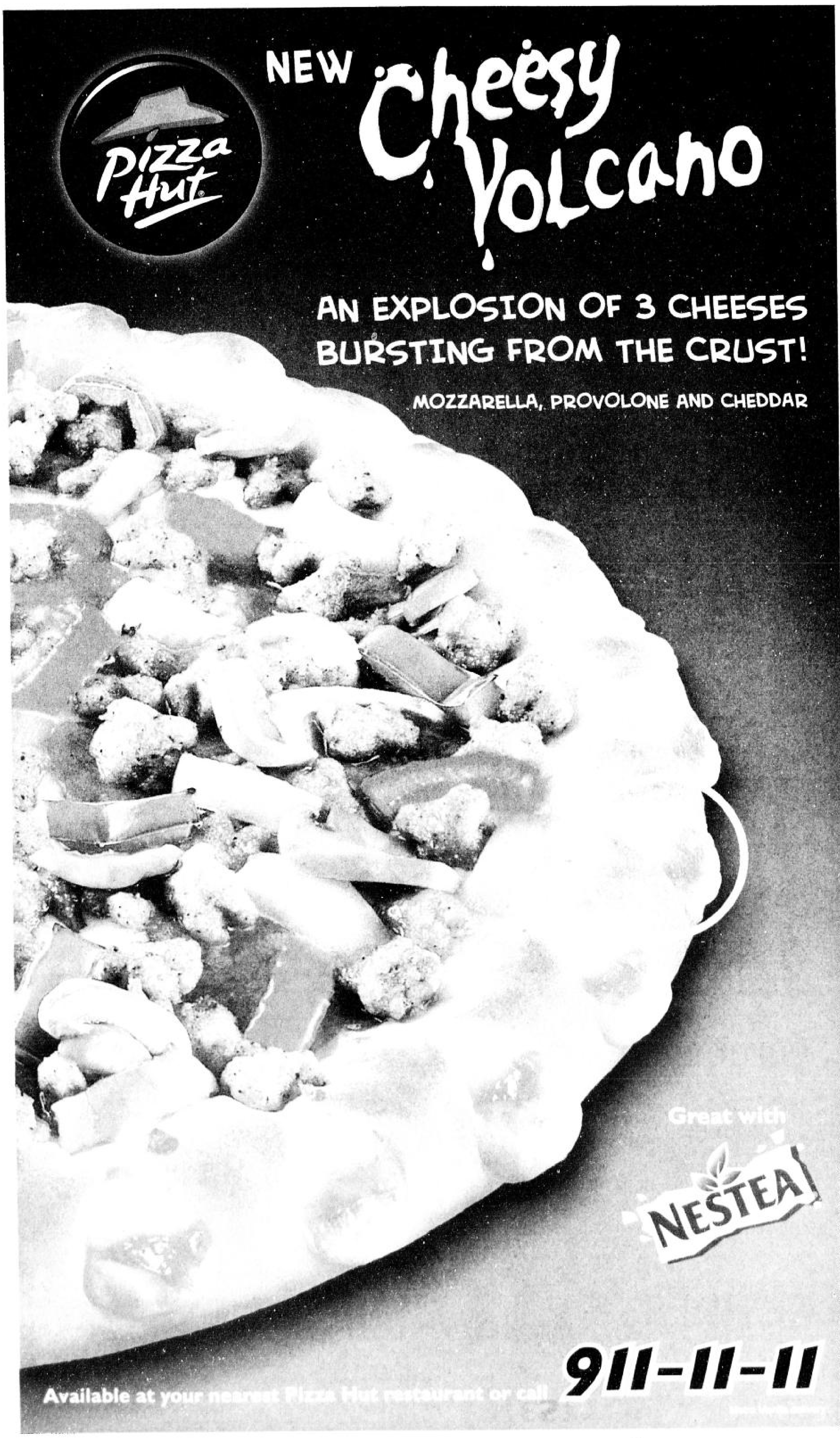
ADIDAS, OFFICIAL SPONSOR OF THE 2006 Fifa World Cup in Germany, has launched "Impossible Team," an inspirational campaign with the best football players.

The ad, stressing the power of team work, features FC Bayern Munich's Oliver Kahn, Michael Ballack, and Bastian Schweinsteiger; Liverpool FC's Steven Gerrard and Djibril Cissé; Chelsea FC's Damian Duff, Frank Lampard and Arjen Robben; AC Milan's Kaka Alessandro Nesta; Eintracht Frankfurt's Du-Ri Cha; Juventus Turin's Patrick Vieira; Tottenham Hotspur's Jermain Defoe; Villarreal CF's Juan Román Riquelme; FC Schalke's Kevin Kuranyi; Celtic Glasgow's Shunsuke Nakamura; FC Köln's Lukas Podolski; Juventus' David Trézéguet; and Real Madrid CF's Zinédine Zidane, Raúl, and David Beckham.

Also included are Franz Beckenbauer and Michel Platini.



ARJEN Robben, FC Chelsea midfielder from The Netherlands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